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THE
TROTTINGS OF A TENDERFOOT.

THE

TROTTINGS OF A TENDERFOOT:

A Visit to the Columbian Fiords, and Spitzbergen.

BY

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'SPORT IN THE CRIMEA AND CAUCASUS,' ETC.

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THE MARQUIS OF LORNE, K.T., K.G.M.C., ETC.

(LATE GOVERNOR GENERAL OF CANADA).

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PREFACE.

LAST year the Northern Pacific Railway opened a new route to Vancouver Island, and British Columbia generally, *viâ* Portland. This year a new line of rail, the Canadian Pacific, promises to bring these lands within a fortnight's travel of London. Year by year the tide of emigration sets stronger towards the West, and as these lands are at the present moment attracting considerable attention in England, I have less hesitation than I otherwise should have had, in offering the record of a two months' stay in them to the public.

Some chance allusion of mine may serve some of the members of the several colonies, whose advertisement in the daily papers gives notice of an early departure to the scenes of my last shooting trip; or at least my description may interest those that stay behind.

A critic of my last book blamed me for lingering too long over sporting scenes. It was hardly fair, as I never pretended to be anything but a sportsman, and no one expects landscapes from an animal painter, or figs from thistles.

Another blamed me for not reading other men's works on the same subject as that on which I wrote. In both these mistaken ways, reader, I fear I must remain, believing that a man writes best on what he knows best and loves most, and is more likely to help the public to a true estimate of any new country as an unbiased eye-witness, than as the disciple of other men, seeing the sights they have seen through their spectacles.

I have, however, ventured to touch on farming, as so many of our young waifs are now drifting out to America as amateur agriculturists. I don't profess to be a farmer. As an English landowner in bad times, I wish I was one; but wherever I have made any statements with regard to farming, I have done my best to obtain them from the most reliable sources, and to understate, rather than overstate, the advantages of American farm lands.

That is all I think by way of preface, reader, except that if you mean to follow me to Vancouver, I wish you *bon voyage.*

TROTTINGS OF A TENDER-FOOT;

OR,

THE COLUMBIAN FIORDS.

I.

BY THE N.P. RAILWAY.

EVERYBODY nowadays has read as much as he or she cares to about the voyage across the 'herring-pond,' a voyage of which many of our American cousins think less than other men think of a Channel-crossing. Given a good digestion and calm weather, the ten days at sea are days to look back upon with pleasure; and even in rougher times, such as fell to our lot, the big roll of the Atlantic is not half as hard to endure as the lesser heavings of smaller seas. In spite of advertisements to the contrary, ten days from Liverpool to New York is still the average duration of a passage, and I was not the only passenger on board to whom this was an unpleasant surprise. Steamship companies are too fond of quoting their shortest passages instead of the average one, and in almost all cases they date their departure, not from Liverpool, but Queenstown, long before reaching which many a feeble brother and sister have given themselves up a prey to their enemy, *mal de mer*.

Let us skip the voyage, with its fogs and storms; its talker, who was only silenced (and that after a struggle) by the fog-horn; its American clergyman, whose creed was that his cloth allowed him to tenderly squeeze any fair sister in need of consolation; its concert, at which two charming ladies tried to make themselves heard amongst the rattling of the ship's glasses and failed, while two low (very low) comedians essayed to din into unwilling ears something about Paddy Somebody's ball, and succeeded only too well. Let us skip this and the lectures and recitations—though we can hardly bring ourselves to omit mention of the heroine who, on her second stormy night on board, demolished two ship's Welsh-rabbits and a bottle of lemonade for supper—and hurry on to the time when, in spite of fog and head-winds, we sighted the American coast.

For ten days we have been constantly together, and yet here we are on the last day on deck, all vainly endeavouring to recognise one another in a multitude of new costumes, worn not in honour of the people we are about to visit, alas! but to be able to answer truthfully the Custom-house officer's inquiry when he asks: 'Is this all personal clothing, and been worn before?' I had quite made up my mind to like America and Americans, to be biased in no way by what I had read; but why, oh! why did my portmanteau steadily refuse to yield to the persuasions of its key? It would not open, nor would the burly official's mouth keep shut. In the meekest way I asked where I could get something to prize the trunk open. 'How the h— should I know?' remarked this most polite of gaugers. 'Well, if you can't tell me that, and can't open the trunk yourself, you'd better stick to it; I give it up,' quoth I. Then I heard a Yankee swear for the first time, and he did it as if he had learned young. I too got rather nettled at this, and spoke plain things, easily understood on the spur of the moment, when to my astonishment his wrath vanished, and, clapping me familiarly on the shoulder, he said (I give his own words): 'Never mind a hard word, sonny; swearing's habitual with me; leastwise, occasional.' And with that he passed my trunk.

No one seemed to like the Custom-house, and of all the irreconcilables the Americans returning home seemed the most vehement. The fun of the whole thing made amends to me for any little bother; and there are far worse Custom-houses in Europe, without going so far as Russia, where they reach the climax of all things abominable. Round the office was a long line of people swearing to all sorts of statements about their effects, amongst whom my chum, excited and vehement about a new gun, was launched by a friendly official, with the remark to the clerk in charge: 'Here, mister, *here's* another man who seems cussedly anxious to sweer.'

Of course we saw what we could in New York, though New York seemed extremely empty; were introduced to a variety of old friends in the way of long drinks concealed under new names and taken through a straw; admired the handsome brown stone houses; felt staggered rather at a *menu* at the Windsor Hotel, including such hitherto unheard-of luxuries as chicken gumbo, sheep's-head (a fish), stringbeans and mush; gazed in terror at the pretty jewelled fingers and white teeth opposite making short work of a very buttery corn-cob; visited a kind of theatre, where the song of the evening dwelt lovingly on the fact that 'Sullivan had put the dotlet on the

Maōri's eye,' this song, or at least this verse, meeting with a rapturous reception; and then resigned ourselves gladly to a comfortable Pullman car *en route* for St. Paul's and the North Pacific Railway.

I don't think I like New York: the 'City' part of it seems all over the town, and it has no West End to it, and it seemed to me to have an unfinished appearance, common to all America and the outskirts of our own metropolis; but then I was only in it a day, and had not time to form an opinion, or get used to the queer unworkman-like appearance of its horses, carriages, and half-finished streets. Like Niagara, I suppose you ought to stay for some time to get used to its magnificence, and appreciate its beauties. For as to that mighty river phenomenon, when seen from the railway carriage, I was, like many others, sorely disappointed; but am content to reserve judgment, and admit I have never properly seen either New York or Niagara. But if the views from the windows failed to impress me, my fellow-passengers did quite the reverse; and the amusement I got out of my friendly and loquacious travelling companions in the Pullman smoking-car was almost worth the journey.

Guessing at once that we were sportsmen, every passenger had some hunting story to tell, some locality to recommend, and everyone seemed to have passed his life in pursuit of game. Alas! one of my fellow-passengers from England fell a victim, and for his faith was sent off to some desolate prairie, where, after a week or two spent in hunting, he came to the conclusion there was no game in America bigger than a jack-rabbit, and Solomon must have gained some of his experience of men amongst Americans. One opinion was no doubt as valid as the other, but a man's convictions are the result of circumstance; and if experience is valuable according to the price paid for it, his was worth having. One of my friends specially recommended Maine as the best place in the country for sport.

'Ducks and trout in plenty, and lots of moose; but duck-shooting is the attraction. Did you ever see Americans call duck? No? Ah—well, it's worth while going to Maine to see that alone. Why, stranger, I was there once with two shooters, who knew something about calling. Tell you what I saw. There was a kind of a "crik"—a broadish crik it was, and one was one side, and one the other. Both were in hiding, and presently an old mallard came along, pretty high up. The chap on my side began calling the mallard as natural as life. The bird was off in a twinkling towards him, when just before he got well under way, the chap the other side commenced to call too. For about two minutes that mallard stuck right atween the two, as if he had a mind to go both ways at once, when all of a sudden he bust right in two, and one half flew one way, and one the other. Each gunner shot and bagged a quarter of a brace.'

With yarns like this, many cigars, and a dining-car, we beguiled the way to St. Paul's, where our first stage ended, and the Northern Pacific commenced. St. Paul's is too well known to need description; and for fear of boring my reader, I shall skip all the big towns, reserving his patience for minute descriptions of places where tourists are few, and of which much has not already been written. But no one can help being struck by the feverish business-like energy of all these towns. Everywhere seems full, everyone busy, and all the hotels doing a roaring trade.

In St. Paul's, at the Merchant's Hotel, the ground-floor, like that in the Palmer House at Chicago, swarmed with the young business men of the place; in fact, as I dare say has been said before, the hotels in America are the clubhouses for the residents as well as refuges for the travellers. The billiard-room, in which we smoked our last cigar before turning in, was full all night, though it boasted nine tables, and at least fifty candidates for a game were always in waiting; and yet the Merchant's is far from being the only hotel in the town, and possibly not even the best.

The mention of the Palmer House reminds me that I have skipped Chicago, an omission easily forgiven by anyone who has ever read any work on America; for perhaps, if I gain no other distinction, I shall live as the only traveller who passed through Chicago without devoting a page to its prosperity and its miracles in the conversion of pigs into pork in a limited number of seconds. I never care to see anything made which I am particularly fond of eating, and my breakfast bacon is a thing I don't care to forego. One thing that struck me a good deal on my way through the American cities was, that I never saw any so-called 'high-tone' niggers; and, except in the capacity of barbers, waiters, and shoe-blacks, never saw any coloured men in the hotels. Wondering whether it was from a national want of energy which prevented their ever rising above the menial class of positions in which I saw them, I asked information from my fellow-travellers, who assured me, with apparent honesty, that no coloured man would be admitted in a high-class hotel, nor as a rule any Jew; and though this latter seems incredible, and is probably untrue, I am the more inclined to believe the first statement, as I have seen in newspapers since my return that even actors were not until quite recently received in the very best hotels in New York. So much for freedom and equality in the land of Uncle Sam. The nigger seems to the ignorant hardly a brother, or at best only very much a younger brother yet.

Of course, as we had come prepared with the lightest of garments, dust-coats, etc., we had no heat and very little alkali dust on our road elements in a traveller's misery seldom wanting on the other lines across the American Continent. Our worst sorrow was that Mr. Villard's great picnic party was just in front of us, and, like a flight of locusts, had devoured every edible thing on the road, carrying off dining-cars and everything else in its train. So for the first few days we had bad enough times, getting what we could at roadside saloons, and comforting ourselves as best we might with the conductor's trite philosophy, 'The trouble isn't to get the food on the line, but to di-gest it.' How an American ever expects to digest his food is a problem to a 'tender-foot,' as they call us new-comers. A stomach prepared by a steady course of tobacco-chewing from morning to mid-day, and then surprised by the sudden advent of half a dozen courses, and a glass of iced-water, all arriving simultaneously, or at least all within the space of a few minutes, is to my mind a very much handicapped digesting organ. I presume it is in consideration of the telegraphic speed with which an American bolts his meal that in almost every American restaurant all the courses are served together; still, it is a pity, as I often explained to the waiters, that they won't remember that Englishmen have only one mouth, calculated only to deal with one course at a time, and most dishes lose by getting cold.

Though we were now travelling on a new line, settlements were everywhere visible from the windows of our Pullman, and the corn-lands of Dakotah have long earned a reputation in the West. No other lands yield such crops, if my smoking-car companions (most of them men interested in agriculture) were to be believed; and the rich farms lying mile after mile along the line, unbroken by fences, and looking out of all proportion to the little rough wooden houses in which the owners dwelt, though selling now at from twenty to thirty dollars an acre, will produce an average of from twenty-five to forty bushels of wheat to that area. Wisconsin, nearer Eastern civilization, yields an average of fifteen bushels to the acre, and costs about fifty dollars per acre. I don't suppose there is any part of the world in which you can have the picture of man taming nature brought so vividly before you as you can on the Northern Pacific Railway. On all sides, to the very verge of your vision, stretch ocean-like expanses of prairie, with its tussocks of purple sun-dried grasses, or its dreary expanses of sage-brush. The only thing like the Western prairie which I have ever seen is the steppe-land of the Crimea, and there are places in Dakotah and Montana so like parts of the Crimea between Kertch and Theodosia, that I would guarantee that a Malo Russ, if suddenly transplanted from one to the other, would never realize that he had left home. Every now and again you see from your window scores of buffalo skulls whitening the plain, over which now cornfields and young towns of wooden houses are creeping at railroad-pace. Here, ten years back even trappers dared not come, though the quantity of game tempted them ever so. Here, where the houses cluster and the saloon fills daily, a massacre occurred, in which brothers, perhaps, of some of these very settlers fell. The Indian camp-fires are hardly cold on the plains, but English and Yankee hearths are already in their places, and the prairies will never know the red man again. The beasts go with him, for, to do him justice, he was a good game-preserver: recognised the cattle of a thousand hills as his chief source of supply, and only killed what his hunger required. Of course, the red man must go, but I could not breathe the breath of his glorious hunting-grounds, nor gaze across their yellow lengths of moorland, without feeling sorry for him, and shuddering for civilization, whose representative, an old frontier officer of many years' service, sitting by my side, calmly admitted that most of the Indian wars were due to the greed of pioneer settlers, who, having pushed their farms beyond the reach of a market, had fomented disturbances amongst the Indians living on their borders in the narrow reservations allotted to them by the usurping race, until, irritated beyond endurance, the red man turned and slew one or two of his foes. Then news was sent post-haste to the Government of an Indian rising; troops came in due course, eat the pioneers' farm-produce, slew the unhappy red man, and again all was well. Of course, no one at home made inquiries as to the cause of the Indian trouble; it did not appear to be the officer's duty to accuse his fellow white man, so 'civilization' spread, and the red man went further back, or died.

It was quaint from time to time, as we wound through a very sea of yellow corn-fields, to watch, as the train slackened speed, a party of settlers drop off the cars, and, still in the garments of town life, plod away to where little log-houses lay islanded amid the corn. No wonder the Yankee becomes independent and self-reliant, living so often face to face with nature, turning prairies into corn-fields, and the home of the bison into cow-pastures.

Now and again, before we reached the wilder tracts, the train rushed through the streets of a town, the big bell over the engine tolling like an English passing bell, to warn vehicles or pedestrians from the train's highway, for no barrier exists between it and the ordinary thoroughfares. Though cultivated, the prairie has not lost altogether its look of savagery and freedom, and this perhaps is due to the want of fences, which, though they might give to these broad stretches a more English air of snugness and comfort, would take away from that sense of vastness which they, like the ocean, convey to the mind of a newcomer. Yet when you do get into American enclosed lands, ye powers, what fences shut them in! Not the wildest rider that ever crossed Leicestershire or Galway would dream of putting a horse at those irregular masses of untrimmed timber, or, worse still, at a kind of fence most common in the Canadian part of our route, which was composed entirely of black upturned tree-roots, charred and ugly to look at, and impossible to get through or over.

My first intention had been to leave the train at Miles City, there to seek for a 'scallywag' who lived in Happy Valley. I hope I have spelt the gentleman's professional title correctly; it means, as far as I know, a 'rascally skin-hunter,' with whom I had intended to try for wapiti, buffalo, and big-horn. But at St. Paul's I had been assured that buffalo were the only beasts which I was likely to meet with there, and these the scallywag killed in most unsportsmanlike style; so that, not caring much for cow-shooting, and anxious not to gain the reputation of being a mere sporting butcher, I passed Miles City, and kept on my course for Portland.

In winter, I am told on good authority, lots of wapiti come down to Little Missouri, and other places not far from Miles City, but it would be as well to take some trapper with you, of whom you know something, as the trappers of Miles City and Missouri bear a bad name.

My informant at St. Paul's made me laugh at a quaint figure of speech that I often heard again in the States on asking for information about bear. 'I ain't lost no bar, stranger, you bet your sweet soul,' he assured me; and seeing I didn't understand his meaning, explained that 'You don't go much on looking for what you hain't lost, do yer, mister? No, sirree! and I don't look much for bar.' So I passed on through the Bad Lands, wondering greatly that we saw no sign of life on the way, except once or twice a coyoté, and every now and again a dog-town.

At last, as we came near Glendive, I made out, on one of the mud-bluffs near the line, what looked less like an antelope than it ought to have done; and my surprise was not greater than the conductor's when with my opera-glasses we made out a fairly good mountain-ram, standing out boldly against the sky-line watching the train. He was comparatively close to us, on an elevation not more than a couple of hundred feet above the level of the prairie, and as I marked his fine curving horns, I repented sorely that I had not stayed in a country where this king of mountain game may apparently be met with almost on the flat.

Miles City, Glendive, Missouri, and Billings are all, no doubt, thriving places, though as yet not averaging, I should fancy, 3,000 head of inhabitants apiece; but it seemed to me that there were as many saloons or drinking dens in each of them as there were shops for the sale of less noxious articles than spirits.

In Ainsworth, a city (save the mark!) farther west on the Columbia river, there seems to be but one street, that nearest the line, and when we investigated that on our return journey, we found in every house a faro-table in full swing.

In Montana, of course, cattle take the place of wheat, and our cars had several passengers in them whose life had been spent as cowboys or cattle-bosses. From these I gathered that though the winter was somewhat severe, the broken nature of the land afforded such capital protection to the herds that comparatively few beasts perished; that though the best times for cattle-raising had perhaps passed in the last seven years, there would always be lots of money to be made in the business; that anyone, however big a fool he might have been, who had embarked on cattle-raising ten years ago, must have made a fortune; but that though now more capital and more knowledge were required than formerly, still 25 per cent. interest on capital sunk on a range was no great success to boast of (cattle, they said, ought always to pay that), and there was still land to be taken up by new-comers who understood the choosing of it, though no doubt the best had already been taken.

About this point only (room for new-comers) there seemed a good deal of divided opinion; one fine-looking fellow, owner of a big ranche, and apparently a practical man, contending that in twenty years he had been pushed, by the rapidly advancing waves of fresh settlement, from the Arkansas up to the Mussel Shell River; and that if at the present moment he wanted to locate 10,000 head, he would not know where to do it. Every year, he added, when he went back, he found his old ranges filled up with small farmers. At the present time, cattle are selling off the range for the Chicago market at 60 dols. per head for 'three-year-olds;' beef sells in Billings at 18 cents per lb. (ordinary butchers' meat); and all meat is as high in price in New York as it is in England. So that every day more and more men are going into the cattle-trade.

In Montana, so I was told, nearly two-thirds of the capital invested is either English or Scotch, and Englishmen and Scotchmen swarm over the country as cowboys as well as owners. We hear a good deal in England of cowboy horsemanship; but American cattle-men themselves told me, unasked, of Englishmen—brought up to far softer lives than cow-driving—whose first claim on their men's respect was that they could beat them at their own trade. During my wanderings in America, I came across a good many cowboys of both classes: young Englishmen who learnt to ride first to some well-known pack of fox-hounds in the Old Country, and rougher specimens of Yankee breed, presumably brought up as cowboys. None spoke ill of their rough life; though rising at dawn, or before, to pass a whole day in the saddle, and perhaps at night patrol round their beasts, with rough weather sometimes and rough fare always, seems hard work even for from 35 to 50 dols. a month.

In spite of the want of society and rough work, those of our men whom I had the luck to meet did not seem to have lost any of their polish; and if a youngster in the climate of Montana, leading such a life—away from all the vices of civilization—does not at least grow into a fine, self-reliant animal with magnificent physique, he cannot have much in him originally.

We heard a very great deal *en route* about the wild doings of cowboys, and were almost inclined to unpack our revolvers, save for the unpleasant consciousness that we hardly knew how to use them. Luckily we left them where they were. The ranchers we met all told the same story. On the range, rows with cowboys never occurred. If a man did not do his work, or treated his horses badly, you gave him his pay quietly, and he went. There was an end of it.

Of the cowboy off the range you saw nothing, unless you were a fool or sick of life. Fancy a set of powerful men, shut off from the taming influence of the fair sex, leading the healthiest possible life on plains where every breath of air brings appetite and exhilaration beyond that of champagne; for half a year they have no frolic, possibly no liquor, and then they are let loose, strong as giants, into a frontier town where every other house is a saloon. A little liquor soon sets such hot blood on fire; and then, as there is no other amusement, they take naturally to fighting. The revolver is their favourite toy, and no men use it more accurately than they do, or with more marvellous rapidity.

Used to risk their lives constantly in the saddle in their daily employ, they set no great store on human life, and their free fights often end fatally. But this is only among themselves, or at least among those who share the saloons with them. If you don't care for this side of the cowboy's character, keep out of the saloons. On our way out and back we heard of one or two cases of fatal affrays; but these are really rare, considering the opportunities offered to lawless spirits in places so little within reach of the law.

Apropos of this subject, can it be with a view to reassuring the timid passenger from the East, that in one of the official railway circulars the regulations with regard to the corpse-rate is set forth with such painful precision, that you can hardly feel as grateful as you ought, to the line which generously offers to forward your corpse at a moderate rate if ‘in good condition?’ There was a story afloat at Miles City that a lawyer had recently arrived from the East to settle some legal dispute as to a land-claim. Arrived at his destination, he sought the hotel, a vision of home-comfort before his eyes, and anxious to appear spruce as usual, tipped the Pullman porter his 25 cents like a man, got brushed down, changed his travelling-cap for a brightly burnished stove-pipe hat of orthodox height, and departed. The hotel, of course, resolved itself into a saloon; beds, dinner, and anything but spirits, difficult to obtain; and unluckily some boys ‘on the bust,’ were between our friend and the saloon. No such mark as a stove-pipe hat had met those happy cowboys for years, and in less than no time three bullets were put neatly through it. That lawyer came back in a travelling-cap; has since refused all business west of St. Paul's; and hat-boxes are the rarest kind of luggage on the N. P. Railway.

But even cowboys feel the advance of civilization; and I was assured that nowadays to equip a 'real tony cowboy,' from his spurs to his hat-band, 200 dols. was hardly enough.

Of course, all along the N. P. Railway speculation is at fever-height. Everyone you meet has a place to recommend, and all the conversation is of town lots and sections. In most of the towns, perhaps, money invested in town lots will be well laid out, and often returns enormous profits in a few years; but even at this game a man must be very careful, as at least a third of the towns are mere bubble towns, dependent on the construction of the railway for existence, and liable at a moment's notice to decline, and in a very short time even disappear, when the railway work is done, or the railway's patronage transferred elsewhere. Of all the towns we passed, Bismarck, on the Missouri, seemed to me the likeliest place for investment, as its excellent river-communication enables it to keep down railway-rates, and it seems to bid fair to become a great distributive centre. On all such points the man who wants to speculate will get as good information, perhaps, from the conductor of the train, or even the Pullman porters, as from anyone else; for though liable to be themselves interested in such matters, these men constantly passing along the line have exceptional opportunities of obtaining information. So, though the familiarity with which a conductor or porter will sit down alongside you in your smoking-car is rather contrary to our ideas of etiquette, as between employer and employed, it is best to cultivate these people, as any conversation held between you and them is more likely to be to your advantage than to theirs.

As the line leaves Montana and runs into Idaho, the nature of the country-side changes. From yellow corn-lands and rolling oceans of prairie we have passed into the quaint, rugged, and forbidding Bad

Lands. Now we leave them in turn, and enter a rockier region, where forest and mountains, rivers and canyons, look more beautiful, but are probably worth less. I have seen so much florid writing in guide-books and newspapers—in the pay, probably, of the new railway—about the natural beauties of Montana, Idaho, and the rest, that, even had I not seen the Caucasus and Switzerland, I hardly think I should let my pen run away with me on this subject. As it is, I confess to having seen from my railway window much fine scenery, a few glorious gorges, magnificent plains and sportsmen's paradises; but as for scenery to rival any of our great Eastern wonderlands, I can only say that I don't (in all humility) think that they are to be seen from the rails of the N. P. Railway. My memory may be defective—perhaps I was asleep, or we passed it in the night—but if we did pass a mountain, properly so called, between St. Paul's and Portland, I have either forgotten it or never saw it.

There were two other things besides fine scenery of which I had expected to see a great deal more than I actually did—to wit, what I [illegible] call spittoon-practice and advertisements. I had expected to find every picturesque rock labelled 'Smith's Gargling Oils,' or somebody else's 'Bitters,' and no place safe from the perils of expectoration. But though we saw one strange specimen of the advertising craze in New York, a huge statue of Lafayette so buried in garlands that until next day we could not find out who he was, and almost believed he was the identical Mr. Le Moult, florist, whose huge placards adorned every spare space on the statue; yet along the N. P. Railway, as yet, no bill-sticker has done much harm. It seems hard, even in practical America, to make a hero's statue on the anniversary of his birth a hoarding for a tradesman's advertisements.

The days slipped by at last, until, several hours late, and suffering from indigestion and alkali - water, we arrived at Portland in Oregon, after eighteen days' travel by sea and land, thankful to have crossed the continent in safety, especially remembering those long spans of line laid on wooden trestles, 226 feet from the bottom of the canyon, in which we got a glimpse of men at work with a flume, washing, I believe, for gold. There are, perchance, many other things of which I might have made mention; the beauty of the lumber-men's firelit camps, as we flashed past them in the wooded country, round Spokane falls, near which a valuable gold mine has just been discovered; the deserted encampments where, in semi - subterranean hovels, the navvies had passed months of their lives before the line was laid; the sudden rush and spread of a prairie fire, when a spark from the engine falling on the dry grasses near the track clad the whole place in flames—the spark that gleamed only like a dropped fusee one moment, bursting into tongues of fire the next, and before the train had taken me out of sight, filled the darkness of the prairie with leaping flames and lurid smoke. I don't suppose such a fire would travel far, or do much harm; but it might, and for that reason I presume it is that in most places a long line of black burnt country runs alongside the rails, as a safety-belt between the fire and the grazing-lands beyond.

I might have told, too, of the sharpers who got on the cars at Wallula, and how, though they managed to rob a poor woman of her little all (tied up in a tempting bundle, and put away under her pillow), the combined astuteness and gallantry of the passengers compelled the thieves to disgorge their plunder; but the pace at which we have been coming seems to have got into my pen, which feels as anxious to get across the frontier into British Columbia and a shooting-camp as ever the penman was.

Here we are, reader, over five thousand miles on our way, just arrived at the growing town of Portland, still decked in the banners in which she greeted Mr. Villard, the chief promoter, if not author, of her being.

'Are you full up, conductor?' yells a bustling Yankee. 'Then fire her off right smart. We've had no breakfast yet,' and then, as my chum stumbles into the 'bus, treading on everyone's feet as he goes, one child of the West looks up without a smile, and in solemn nasal tones drawls out:

'Mighty big feet of yourn, ain't they, stranger?' and W., unable to remonstrate with a man he has already injured, relapses into silence under the libel, until we reach the worst hotel out West, St. Charles Hotel, Portland.

II.

PORTLAND AND THE 'SOUND.'

PORTLAND might to-day be taken as a fair type of the young American town 'on the boom.' All along the line from St. Paul's, the talk of all the men we met had been of speculations (chiefly in 'lots'), and the budding future of the new world around us. Every town we passed through had its chances and its champions, and many of my fellow-travellers were passing along the line simply as participators in the big land-gamble now enacting in Montana, Oregon, etc. But still the cry always was, 'Wait till you get farther West!' And now we had got to the most Western town on the N. P. Railway, and to the very heart of the business excitement of which the N. P. Railway has been the cause. Portland is certainly a fine young city, its buildings handsome and substantial; not erected as temporary structures doomed to come down as soon as time and money can be found to build better. The site of the town is picturesque as well as commercially advantageous; the Williamette river hemming it round on one side, while ranges of low serrated hills, covered with pines and maples, shut it in on the other. But Portland is growing rapidly out of its frame; and once you have gained a point of vantage, you will see that the town has already crept a long way over the river, while far up the hills on either hand the white villas of the wealthier citizens gleam among the bright foliage of the maple woods.

When we reached Portland the town was not perhaps at its best, for the streamers and wreaths it had worn to greet Mr. Villard were still hanging about, and the general effect a week after the fête was not imposing. The whole town seemed full of 'drummers' (*i.e.*, bagmen, or commercial travellers), and every other shop-window contained a board, placarded over with notices of lots for sale. Better shops than those of Portland you will have some difficulty in finding outside New York; but the growth of the different institutions has been extremely uneven, the hotels being especially behindhand.

To our sorrow we were advised to put up at the St. Charles Hotel, and did so. The house is a good illustration of the rapidity with which the demand for luxuries and the change from frontier life to urban civilization has progressed in Portland. At first we were offered a den without a window or any means of lighting, day or night, except by candles. This we refused; after which, and a delay of an hour, the big hotel supplied us with one of the two men-servants (Irishmen) who do its whole work of bell-boys, boots, or light porters. This fellow did his best to pilot us along the maze of corridors and passages in which the different bedrooms are situated, but though a number is chalked on every door, there is no system, and the position of twenty-four is no clue to the probable whereabouts of twenty-five. A gorgeous carpet deadens your footfall in the passage, and lends a cheeriness to your room, to which your marble-topped furniture and fine swing-mirror give an air of downright luxury, until your eye is startled by a roughly whitewashed wall, and your wrath aroused by a blind which cannot be pulled up, but is sustained by the simple insertion of a couple of pins. You turn round for the bell-boy, but he has vanished. You seek for the bell round and round the room, but no electric button or familiar bell-rope meets your eye ; you seek the passage. There is no bell nor bell-boy there; you shout, and only echo answers, and you return with the conviction upon you that after all you are really camping out, though in a comfortable camp, and, as is usual in such circumstances, must be prepared to wait upon yourself. But early morning in such a chamber is worse than the same hour in camp, where a natural tub is always close at hand.

Lost on the highest story of a big hotel, cut off by unnumbered stairs and want of means of communication from your fellow-man, ignorant of the geography of your abode, you are likely to pass a very miserable morning; rambling about in dishabille to capture bell-boys or the early smirking chambermaid, from whom you ascertain that if you want a bath there is one at the corner of Fourth Street; and if you want shaving-water in your room, 'she guesses that the man at the bar will have some hot for some of his customers by this time; leastways, you can go and see.' And so you can, and go and do anything else for yourself which you have a mind to; and if you think that just because your name is John Bull, Esq., with a good balance at your bank, you are going to get servants to do most things for you in Portland, you are extremely likely to go home disgusted.

I suppose really good servants exist somewhere out of England, but I cannot say I ever met with any; and even there they are getting scarce, while the article exported to America certainly loses all its good qualities on the voyage out.

Sunday was the first day of our sojourn in Portland, and though we did find a very good church in the town, we also found many other places of public resort much better filled. On this particular Sunday the greatest attraction offered to the public was a prize-fight held within the town limits, and described on the placards as an 'honest knock-out affair;' the second part of the programme to consist of a waltzing competition amongst lady amateurs, the prize, of a very magnificent description, to be awarded to the victor by grace and endurance.

But ere long Portland will see better days even than these.. Already the N. P. Railway has made some land speculator's fortune by the purchase, at a very long price, of a site for a new hotel, and there is even now one excellent restaurant in the town; while apart from the influx of business men, which cannot fail to follow on the completion of the new line, the neighbourhood has attractions in beautiful Mount Hood, the glacier of Mount Tacoma, and the broad waters of the Columbia river, which tourists will scarcely overlook.

I was detained a long time at Portland by the temporary loss of my luggage, due as much to my bad management as to the railway company's neglect. But at the furriers' and the gunsmiths' I had no difficulty in passing my time; for this town is the chief depôt for wapiti horns, perhaps, in the States, and more than one fine collection of these glorious trophies has found its way into England this year from the stores of Messrs. Kahn alone. About 20 dols. is the price for a fairly good head, and to those who have no scruples about adorning their halls with the result of other men's hunting, a wapiti-head for a 'fiver' is cheap enough. It is a curious fact that cast antlers—'dead' horns, as the Western men call them—unless disguised in paint and varnish, don't command nearly as high a price as those taken from a freshly-killed beast, and yet, except to the eye of a connoisseur, they look, so disguised, the same. Why is this, O ye who buy your trophies? I was almost tempted to run down to the Nehalum Valley for a week among the wapiti, so good were the reports I heard of that district; but short trips are rarely successful, so I abstained, and on my way home I heard that I had probably missed my last chance of killing a wapiti in that valley, as the land, having proved to be excellent for agricultural purposes, is rapidly filling up with settlers.

Tired at last of waiting for my luggage, I made up my mind to go on to Vancouver without it, relying on a friend I had made *en route* from St. Paul's to meet and take care of me, even though destitute, on my arrival at Victoria. So one night W. and I bid each other good-bye on the wharf, intending to meet again in a month's time on his Californian vineyard, an intention which I failed to carry out owing to the press of other engagements. I had hoped to be able to say something of the wine-growing interests in California from personal observation; as it is, I learnt a good deal from hearsay near the vine-growing districts, but was never in them. The wines I tasted of Californian make were a champagne villainous beyond all conception, a red wine, strong and distinctly drinkable, which gave you no headache next day, but left a slightly unpleasant earthy after-taste in your mouth, and a light white wine like hock, which I thought extremely good if you drank the best brands only, and which had the advantage of being very cheap. The difficulty the viticulturists of California have to contend with is not in the land, but in the people. It is the home consumption which must pay the producer, and until the American lower classes drink wine of the same class and to the same degree that the French peasants do, I don't fancy wine-growing in California will have reached its best days. At present the average Yankee does not drink wine, but is a teetotaller during dinner, which he washes down with a deadly draught of ice-water, amusing himself for the rest of the day by poisoning himself with 'nips' of strong spirits.

Starting at night from Portland, much of the scenery of the Columbia river is missed, and to give anything like an idea of the journey from Portland to Victoria, I must roll two trips into one. A noble river, with dark banks of richly-timbered lands, with mists rolling away and giving beautiful glimpses of blue water and wooded distances, is all the impression I managed to glean from my peep at the Columbia river; but from Tacoma my memory serves me better. Tacoma is at the southern end of the sound, and is the port whence travellers embark for Victoria in Vancouver's Island. It takes its name from the re-christened peak, Mount Rainier, formerly Tacoma, which towers over it, and which is in the near future (so say the prophets) to attract swarms of tourists to the neighbourhood, win laurels from Switzerland for its glaciers, and above all make the fortune of speculators in building-lots at Tacoma. A new trail has just been opened from the town to the foot of the chief glacier, and men say that apart from beauties of scenery, the tourist who carries a rifle will be rewarded by (at least) a glimpse of the Rocky Mountain goat. But Tacoma, though big with promise, is in a very embryo state at present; in fact, but for a wooden shanty at the railway station, and the landing-stage, there is very little outward sign of a town as yet. A crowd of exceedingly loquacious Chinamen, presumably discharged navvies, were all we saw of the population, and right thankful were we that our stay was of the shortest.

To my mind Mount Hood, the beautiful

peak that looks down on Portland, is a more beautiful mountain than Tacoma, but this is a mere matter of taste. But the sound itself from Tacoma to Victoria is beautiful as a dream, and as I saw it last, its blue waters flashing under an October sun, simply alive with shoals of what I imagine were herrings or pilchards, glancing and gleaming just below the surface like living streaks of silver lightning, I believe it was at its best. The beauty of the sound is that wherever you turn it seems full of life and plenty. The 'cultus' ducks, so called because they are unfit for food ('cultus' in Chinook means worthless), were busy at the fishing, and so full-fed were they that their short wings could hardly lift their heavy bodies from the water, as they flapped away, scared by the approach of the steamers, their dragging legs leaving a long line of silver-bright splashes as they skimmed off to quieter feeding-grounds. The long-winged gulls seemed to have hardly time to look at us, so busy were they with the glancing shoals.

On every jetty stood fishers with long poles, from which hung a string, at the end of which was a triangle of metal, furnished with barbs, and this they sunk among the herrings crowding round the wooden posts below, drawing it up with a jerk now and again, to bring two or three of the fish foul-hooked to the surface at every attempt.

Here and there we passed a port, Madison or Ludlow, one busy with a lumber-mill, the other with tall ships a-building near the water's edge, the regular strokes of the builders' hammers sounding musical in the distance.

At Port Ludlow, where the steamer stops for water, is the largest lumber-mill on the sound—so large, indeed, that it cuts up 250,000 feet of lumber in twenty-four hours, and had, when I passed it, a boom at the back of it containing 4,000,000 feet of rough logs waiting for the sawyers. These logs are put into the boom at 7 dols. per 1,000 feet by the lumber-men, and are turned out of the mill as baulks and rough lumber generally, at 12 dols. per 1,000 feet, or at 25 dols. or 30 dols. as rustic boarding and ceiling-boards. Round about lie other logs, signs of a new industry, queer crooked pieces of tough wood, forming two sides of a triangle, thus L. These are for ship's knees, and are made from the roots of the red fir, used in ship-building, and said to be stronger than English oak.

This industry is barely a year old. But every part of the red fir has its use, and even the bark, which in a tree measuring nine feet through is as much as eight or nine inches thick, makes the best of fuel when dry, giving out, I am told, a greater heat than coal.

The three great lumber-mills of the sound, Ports Townsend, Gamble, and Ludlow, are the property of a syndicate of San Francisco capitalists, and very busy they all seemed. But the prettiest sight in the sound on that bright day was Port Madison, its shore and wharves red with sawdust and fresh-cut lumber, alive with busy men and patient horses, a steamer lying waiting for her load of timber in the snug recesses of the little bay, white smoke curling up quietly into the clear blue from three or four mill chimneys, and a swarm of comfortable houses, strongly built and neat, their white gables gleaming out from the masses of golden-leaved maples; the whole picture fitly framed between dark pine-woods and dark water, and bearing everywhere the marks of active prosperity.

As for Seattle, it is, as the Americans say, already 'quite a place,' 'quite a city;' living now and growing at railroad speed—blowing up bubbles of speculation which dance and glisten, gladdening the eye of the speculator, and for the most part belie their bubble nature by refusing to 'bust,' solidifying instead into undeniable success.

Seattle boasts an hotel even now which, for external finish, puts Portland to shame and leaves Victoria out in the cold. Still, when we get to Victoria—though the air of intense energy and 'go' has vanished—

there is something that appeals more strongly to the English mind. It cannot be the mere fact that we are under our own old flag again, though that means much to a Britisher. I own I cannot see Victoria very plainly—not plainly enough, perhaps, to judge her fairly; for a place, after all, is what the people make it—and there is such a throng of jolly, kindly faces between me and the town, that I cannot see its imperfections if I would. But this I can say, I came across no place in America in which I would be so content to stay as in Victoria. It is not only the British flag; it is not only that the English tongue is spoken with its native accent; that people are civil, and porters public servants; that hotel cads no longer damn their unoffending employers; but it is, in a measure, at least, that here there is time to rest for a moment, and fancy once more that there is something else in the world to live for besides the accursed dollar.

At Seattle, Portland, St. Paul's, Chicago, all the way back to the New York landing-stage, the air has been full of speculations; figures have floated constantly before your eyes; everyone has been doing sums, and you yourself, contrary to your nature, have joined in the general pastime; conversation has been saturated with mercantile phrases; and altogether the dollar devil has got such a hold of you that you have begun to feel as feverishly eager as the rest.

But here there is peace. Not that there is any lack of energy or even speculation within moderate bounds; but in Victoria the English element has asserted itself and declared, 'Business before pleasure, if you like; but business without pleasure, never;' so that you wake, as it were, from a railroad nightmare, and rejoice again in the belief that the dollar was made for man, and not man for the dollar.

III.

VICTORIA, B.C.

Of course, for all those who stay at Victoria, the Driard House is the only abiding-place, an hotel to which Paradise must have contributed the cook, and Hades the waiters. When Henri and Alphonse, or whatever their confounded names are, were waiting, conversation became hopeless and life a misery. Plates, chairs, tables, all were spanked about the room with a vigour as disagreeable to the guest as it was dangerous to the crockery. But the cooking surpassed that of the Windsor Hotel, New York, and although this may seem an unworthy subject on which to waste words, anyone who has passed a week in Pullman cars on the trail of such an all-devouring army as Mr. Villard's party of 1883, will understand why I felt so keenly the merits of a good hotel. Besides, Victoria is distinctly a place for English sportsmen to visit, and the first question they require answered is, What sort of an hotel is there, and what do you call it?

Victoria itself has grown from a station of the Hudson Bay fur-traders into a goodly town; not perhaps a very imposing one in the matter of buildings, but set amid such bright waters and richly tinted foliage as few other towns can boast. It contains, too, most of the things that make life pleasant, and is growing rapidly at the present moment. Wooden trottoirs are at the sides of most of the streets; there are any quantity of good substantial houses; the shops are numerous, and hold most of the things that men and women have any real need of; there is a club with three or four billiard-tables, a good cook, a reading-room supplied with all the leading English papers and periodicals; there is a covered lawn-tennis court for wet weather, which serves also as a very good ball-room, and is not allowed to decay for want of use; there is plenty of pleasant society, English settlers and Canadian residents; military and naval men, barristers, and others; several of the houses have lawns for tennis, as good as the best of the courts people play on in English country places, and at some at least of these houses there are tennis-parties regularly every week. Where naval men are stationed social stagnation is impossible, so that no one need dread dulness at Victoria.

Perhaps the first great influx of settlers into British Columbia and Victoria was due to the reported discovery of gold in the province in 1858. Though the gold did not make as many people's fortune as they expected it to, there are now a dozen different industries more profitable to take the place of gold-mining, and those who came to seek gold have remained to can salmon, to work coal-mines (Vancouver's greatest resource), to engage in the lumber-trade and cultivate the marsh-lands of the Frazer river. But whatever the business they follow, they all agree in making the wandering Englishmen who infest the Driard very welcome guests, and the greatest difficulty I experienced was in accepting only sufficient invitations to leave some little time for my shooting-trip. Even hunting is not quite an unknown sport in this happy colony, and two or three times a year Captain D.'s hunt startles the natives, and does its best to smash a way through the very formidable timber which fences in the little tract of country round Victoria in which the forest allows horses room to gallop.

But over on the mainland, report says, a real pack of hounds exists, and hunts foxes or coyotes with no small success. As for game round Victoria, there is no lack of it, though it is not quite as easy to make a big bag of birds as at home. Deer—poor little beasts, as far as their heads go—grouse of two kinds, and quail abound. The officers of the fleet bagged several deer within a few miles of the town whilst I was in the country, and on one occasion I myself came on a party of sportsmen and their wives, seated on the ground by a woodland lake not six miles out of Victoria, their hounds lying about round the encampment and three bucks in their dog-cart, the result of one night's camping out. This was a good bag; but why do gentlemen of Victoria kill deer in this uninteresting way? Stalking tries a man's woodcraft and his wind; if you still-hunt, that is, walk up your deer, you pass through much beautiful forest scenery and get many a quiet glimpse of the home-life of the tall beasts of the woodland; but when you turn in your hounds and wait till the deer come like dumb driven cattle to the water, beside which you have sat till you have got cold and cramped, there is none of the credit due to the quiet pot-shot which a quick snap-shot at a buck on the jump might earn, and your dog has had all the fun and exercise which should have been yours. Besides, you kill too many deer in this way; and what you don't kill, you hunt clean out of the country.

Between Victoria and Goldstream, a charming spot not twelve miles from the town, I heard of twelve deer killed along the road on one day, in this manner.

Goldstream is a place for picnics; a place which will linger in my mind as the scene of an adventure not easily forgotten. One of my friends (forgive me, D., if you ever read this) had taken me out for a drive to Goldstream, with two ladies and a clergyman. Now, the clergyman had no pretensions to coachmanship, and I am no Jehu, though just competent to hold the reins if the beasts will go quietly. The road out was beautiful, and it was great fun looking at the occasional chasms we skirted, and the fallen timber we had to circumvent; it is true that the road was so ill-defined that occasionally we seemed only to be following D. through the most open part of the wood. But when we got to our destination, the food, though rough, was welcome; and a good deal of fun was derived from the discovery of a fair deceiver's *câche* in a hollow tree, from which we extracted one powder-puff, one piece of chalk, a small-toothed comb, and some rouge. The woodland nymphs of Victoria, when picnicking, apparently require more than the mirror of a crystal stream for their toilette.

Meanwhile the night closed in; to our horror there was no moon, and some one had forgotten the carriage-lamps. A dark night at home, in your own dogcart with no lights, and big open ditches on either hand, is unpleasant; though if you have had a good dinner, followed by spiritual consolation, and a good cigar, it is endurable, almost amusing. But a dark night on an unknown road, with two ladies to take care of, a certainty that there is a great deal more unsafe road than 'good going' the whole way home, and a fallen tree or a precipice every twenty yards, is not a thing to be desired.

In about three minutes we were fairly lost; the road was only a trail, and it was so dark that you could not have seen a toll-bar gate at ten paces. It was a very slow progress, and not a cheery one; but the rider on the white horse (how we thanked Heaven for that beast's colour) went ever on before, and by the greatest mercy the final catastrophe did not occur until the ladies had been landed in safety at their own homes, after which, on the way to the stables, a long-suffering lynchpin dropped out, and all was chaos.

The two new railways have of course given an impetus to commercial energy in Victoria; house property has increased in value, and new settlers keep coming in. Two or three different bodies of young Englishmen have established, or are just establishing themselves on the island. The timber trade and coal perhaps employ most capital, but these are far from being the only industries. Farming is extensively carried on at Comox and elsewhere; and though on Vancouver's Island itself there is but little prairie-land, there is a good deal of cattle-ranching on the mainland, while the rich cranberry swamps of the Frazer river are being dyked, and made to yield large returns.

At present these lands are being held at high prices for America, as much as 40 to 50 dols. an acre for partially improved lands being asked and obtained; but the verdict of an experienced English farmer leads me to believe they are worth all the money. It is difficult to see how it can be otherwise, when we consider that hay is sold out here for from 10 to 15 dols. a ton, and an acre of this land yields from 3½ to 5 tons per acre in the two cuts, for here they always get a considerable aftermath. The hay is not perhaps quite of the quality you would give to your hunters in England, but such as it is it meets with a ready sale. The cranberries themselves, which grow naturally on the delta, are talked of as another probable source of profit; and corn, rape and carrots all do marvellously well.

As to the fisheries, the reports did not seem so favourable; but then the only branch of fishing much attended to is the salmon-canning, and there seems to be considerable variation in the annual supply of fish. In the fishmongers' shops I noticed halibut of enormous size, and cod, together with oysters brought down from various points on the sound, where beds of them have lately been discovered. Sturgeon, too, can be obtained in large quantities; but it does not seem to have occurred to anyone that caviar would be better worth canning than salmon. As for herrings, they are in such quantities in the sound, that a company not long since tried to convert their dried bodies into guano, or a substitute for it, having first extracted from them the oil in which they are so rich. Want of experience, probably, in the method of extracting the oil and drying the fish, prevented their enterprise becoming the success they hoped for; but this is still regarded as one of the fortune-making industries of the future.

In Victoria itself the climate is as much like that of Devonshire as any I am acquainted with, though to my mind not so enervating, and all fruits do wonderfully well on the island; grapes and melons ripening in the open air. The crop of pears in several orchards which I visited was simply amazing, each separate bough being supported with props to save it from being broken down with the weight of its own fruit. The latest report which was filling the minds of Victorians with enthusiasm when I left, was that of a marvellously rich copper-mine on the Simalkameen river, which had just been rediscovered. Samples of pretty peacock ore were in everyone's hands, and hope ran high. Take Victoria all in all, its people, its industries, its climate, its chances of sport, its beauty, its various opportunities for pleasure as well as profit, I know no place on earth to which I would rather be exiled; and if the recent visit of the Marquis of Lorne has not given rise to an unusual degree of loyalty, I should say there were no more loyal English anywhere than on Vancouver's Island. Of course Victoria has its drawbacks—what place has not? Servants seem exceptionally hard to get, and wages exceedingly high.

Indians during the fishing season earn as much as 3 dols. per diem, and Chinese cooks take nothing less than from 30 to 50 dols. a month, and even then have an awkward knack of leaving without notice, whenever they feel so inclined. Dress also is a difficulty; but that is the same all over America, and as the 'Masher' is an unknown quantity in the colony as yet, an old coat is not likely to suffer seriously from comparison with its neighbours. Perhaps, after all I have said about Victoria, it is only fair to add that the writer of these lines has serious thoughts of sojourning for some years in British Columbia, so that the reader may either refer the favourable report of this place to the author's desire to please his future fellow-colonists, or look upon his choice of the town for his own residence as the strongest proof of his belief in its advantages.

One word more about Victoria and the neighbourhood before I throw off my town coat and start on the hunt. As long as new-comers keep clear of hired labour, and do all that they have to do for themselves, life in their new home will be cheaper than it was in the old. The moment the question of domestic servants or farm labourers comes before them, their difficulties will begin. To live economically in Victoria, or in its neighbourhood, you must do all your work for yourself. Domestic servants, English, American, or Chinese—and most men employ the latter—cost from 30 to 40 dols. per month and their keep; even then you are never safe, for a Chinaman is seized by unaccountable fits of idleness, or a yearning for social pleasure, and will give you notice and go the same afternoon without any apparent cause or any means of hindering him.

Farm servants' wages are from 1 dol. 75 cents to 2 dols. per diem and their board, whilst all manner of skilled labour must be paid for at exorbitant prices. Of course the price of labour is the most serious drawback to all agricultural operations. It must be remembered, too, that it is not easy to get much good land in a block on any of the coast of Vancouver or the adjacent islands, the soil of the hilly part being light and poor, whilst fern and sallal grow freely everywhere, and are excessively hard to eradicate.

Clearing is a difficult and tedious operation, to say nothing of the cost. The ordinary method is to fell your trees when the sap is rising in them in May and June, lop off the boughs, split what you mean to use, drag what you wish to destroy into piles, and there let it lie through the dry season, until the first shower comes. Then having given the timber time enough to partly dry, the piles are fired. The soil being still damp, is saved from damage, and the wood burned up. The roots are sometimes dug up, but more often left to rot out of the ground.

Another serious disadvantage which men employed in agriculture complain of is the difficulty of obtaining fairly cheap farm implements and machines, the cost of transit from the manufactory, and the heavy duties raising the cost of such things almost to prohibitive prices. For instance, I know of a farmer on one of the islands near Victoria who had to pay 14 dols. on a £10 costermonger's cart, which he had already paid heavily for shipping to Victoria, and 150 dols. (he was at first asked 250 dols.) on a £200 tree-felling machine (by Ransome).

Horses cost nearly as much as beasts of the same class do in England, but cows of a poor class are cheap.

Once or twice I have had buildings pointed out to me, built of timber without nails, the duty on imported goods having put nails out of the reach of small capitalists. House-rent is fairly reasonable, though it is almost as expensive to rent a good house in Victoria as it is in the suburbs of London. A cottage with five rooms (three bedrooms, a sitting-room, and a kitchen) costs 10 dols. per month. The minor hotels, such as the Occidental, are cheap enough, a dollar a day for board and lodging covering one person's expenses. Of course they are not of the same stamp as the Driard, where the charges are very much higher.

Land can be bought for a dollar an acre in the islands off the coast of Vancouver, and if it was not for the difficulty in getting labour, such lands might pay to cultivate, as the seasons are mild, there being very little snow and hardly any ice.

As for farm produce, on Salt Spring Island last year you could obtain 20 dols. per ton for all the hay you could send down to the wharf; 50 cents per lb. for butter; and 30 cents a dozen was the lowest price throughout the year for eggs.

The deer are the settlers' greatest enemies, as on some islands, Salt Spring for instance, they swarm, and neither fences nor loose dogs will keep them out of the farmer's crops at night. They run up to as much as 170 lb. weight when dressed, and sell at from 1 dol. to 3 dols. according to weight, without the skin, which is worth perhaps 50 cents.

To those who wish to see Victoria, I would say it is a country for two classes—good energetic working-men and skilled labourers, and perhaps for capitalists. Personally, I believe there are innumerable openings for capitalists; but it is only fair to add that others who are residents in the country will tell you that nobody is making money, and everyone is up to the eyes in debt. I believe they are misled by the misfortunes of rash speculators, and incompetent or spendthrift 'tender feet.'

There is an alternative route to that across America, greatly to be recommended to those who hate railway travelling and like the sea—*i.e.*, by boat from Southampton to San Francisco. The journey takes longer than that across the continent, being six weeks in all; but the fare is less, 40 dols. covering all expenses from England to San Francisco.

IV.

A CRUISE IN A FOG.

Up to the 26th September the weather in Victoria had been superb; and on the evening of the 27th, as I went down to the steamer—which was to start at six o'clock next morning for my happy hunting-grounds—I almost felt that the tent I was taking with me would be superfluous.

An old campaigner in the Hudson Bay Company's service had fitted me out with all that man could possibly require, packed in inconceivably small space; and, even if a less perfect sky had hung over the golden woods and still blue waters of the sound, I should have looked forward to my hunting expedition with about as much dread of hardships as if I had been entering the Scotch mail in August. The boat was to leave at six in the morning, so, as I knew the country near Victoria pretty well, and had been late up the night before, I made up my mind for a good spell between the sheets. To my astonishment it was still dark when I woke, and, worse still, stomach and watch both agreed that it was past nine o'clock. The boat, too, was still at her moorings.

On deck a dismal surprise awaited me. The fine weather had left us last night, and a fog was enveloping everything in its murky folds; a fog so thick that the boat did not leave Victoria until nearly midday, and even then we had to feel our way as we went. It did seem a trifle hard, after all the brilliant promise of the preceding week, that we should have to crawl up the sound in the darkness, going at a funereal pace for fear of collisions, and never getting a glimpse of the shores in passing.

We ought to have arrived at Nanaimo

early in the afternoon of the first day, but it was 9.30 p.m., and dark as pitch—foggy as the city side of Temple Bar in November—when we got there on this occasion. At Nanaimo, those who want to go on to Comox, or beyond, have to change steamers and proceed in the little s.s. *Maude*. For me it was essential that I should get Indians at Nanaimo to act as my guides and interpreters in my further wanderings, so that when I was put on shore at that port, in the dark, with more luggage than I could possibly shoulder, I felt for a moment utterly helpless. In daylight I should have known what to do, but in the dark, with no one but a few Western rowdies anywhere near, and no town, much less any conveyance, visible in the fog, I was for a moment at my wits' ends how to prosecute my adventure.

A friendly navvy was my *deus ex machina*, and, clinging close to him, I staggered along up the wharf under the load of my camp fixings, never taking my eye off his indistinct figure until he landed me in one of the chief Nanaimo saloons. Here I at once stood him and the bar-keeper sundry drinks, in return for which they put my fixings behind the bar, while one of them offered to find Mr. P. for me, who is the influential Englishman of the place. But, though Nanaimo is the great centre of the coalfields of Vancouver, and has at least 1,000 resident coal-miners, to say nothing of the large population employed in other businesses, Nanaimo is not a convenient place to find your way about at night, and the road to Mr. P.'s house was a very rough scramble in the dark.

For once in a way my friend had turned in early, and it did seem a little unkind to break in on his unaccustomed 'beauty-sleep,' although his cheery voice soon assured me I had no need to fear that my untimely call would be badly received. As soon as I had explained my position, P. procured a lamp and a policeman, both difficult things to find that night, and with these and a couple of dogs to protect us from wanderers of their own kind, we started on our hunt for Indian guides.

The ranche in which the Nanaimo Indians live is little more than a mile from the town; but though my guide had lived here a quarter of a century, it required a good deal of caution, even with a lamp, to find our way thither without breaking a leg. In the winter as many as 2,000 Indians may be found in the ranche at one time; but unfortunately I had arrived just in the busy time of the year, when everyone who could work as a fisher, hop-picker, or in any other capacity, had no need to seek for employment. The fishing Indians —and all the Vancouver Indians are naturally fishers—can earn as much as 12s. per diem, by paddling about in their canoes all day and spinning for salmon. It is a lazy life, and suits them admirably. The salmon come up quite close to where their homes are, so that the Indians just tumble into their canoes, and lolling on bundles of dirty rags, loaf round about the bays in the warm sunshine, from time to time drawing up their lines to clear them from weeds, or give the spoons a sharper spin, all the while paddling only just enough to keep their little crafts in motion. A pipe and a smoke-dried salmon with a bit of bread are all they want in the way of supplies, and they find no lack of customers for their fish at a shilling apiece.

The first place we called at was the home of one Cockshin, a mighty chief, who is so far civilized that he lives in a little detached barn of his own, with a yard round it about the size of a Kensington back-garden, and as much cultivated. A prolonged parley in English brought the chief to the door, screening a match from the wind with his shirt-tail, and thereby displaying a very shapely, if very dirty, pair of 'understandings.' His house was just a big wooden box, with nothing but a few rags and a pipe in it; but it was the best Indian house I saw in Vancouver, and the owner of it spoke excellent English, and really seemed like an enlightened old savage. At any rate, he knew that there were half-a-dozen industries which would pay him as well, and not demand from him so much hard work as packing my camp outfit into the interior. So he refused to come with us, and retired to his rag-pile.

From Cockshin's house we groped our way to the ranche, a big barn, or rather a collection of big barns, large enough to hold several hundred people, and used as a common domicile by the red men when at home. In front of each stood one or more tree-stumps, rudely blazoned with all manner of quaint devices in strong colours, and terminating at the top in the head of some bird or beast. On the doors, too, were similar devices, and these, I am told, are the armorial bearings either of the tribe or its chiefs.

The ranche was, at the time I visited it, almost empty. The interior had no furniture, no partition—nothing to break the monotony of a big bare mud floor but the ashes of a fire or two and the columns supporting the roof, draped with the odoriferous hides of deer and other beasts. Round the walls were a number of shelves, something like the bunks in a ship's cabin. Most of them were untenanted, but from the dirty robes on one or two of them we unearthed an Indian and his squaw, or 'cluchman,' as they call them in this part of the world. My guide shook them up without ceremony, and a more villainously ugly set, men and women, I never had the misfortune to see. None of them had energy enough to object to our unceremonious call, but neither had any of them energy enough to accompany us.

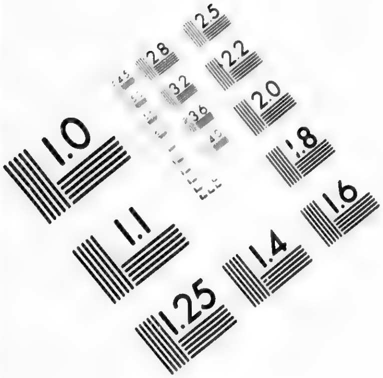
In despair, we returned to the village, and there, down by the wharf, on a veritable dung-heap, we discovered another small nest of unsavoury natives. In a small hut, shared by two dogs and some poultry, dwelt a man and his wife. The whole place was festooned with green hides and salmon in every stage, from raw to dry. On the floor were bowls of roe and the livers of dog-fish, and the den smelt as nothing else on earth can smell. P. shook up the man, and the wife sat sleepily peering from her blankets whilst we bargained with her spouse. P. was getting sleepy (it was now 2 a.m.), and the more sleepy he grew the stronger grew his powers of persuasion. The Indian yielded at last, turned out, whipped the blanket and bedding generally off his squaw, piled it up on his own shoulders, and followed us out into the dark, leaving her to keep warm as best she could until his return.

On our way to the boat we peeped in at the coal-mines, and saw the works going as busily as if it was midday. The coal-fields of Vancouver are her greatest claim to future importance, as they are of large extent (some say almost all Vancouver is a coal-bed); the coal is of excellent quality—so good, indeed, as to find a ready sale at a good price in San Francisco, in spite of the duty imposed upon it; and at the present moment at least 1,000 miners are employed at Nanaimo alone, and, if my informants were not all unreliable, the annual output of coal in Vancouver is now between two and three hundred thousand tons.

Having conveyed my captive and his blankets to the saloon of the little s.s. *Maude*, and seen him comfortably bedded down on the floor, I retired to my own cabin, and slept until breakfast. Of course, the fog still covered the face of the waters, lifting now and again just enough to give us a glimpse of some thickly-timbered headland, or charming bevy of tiny wooded islets, in the shelter of which wild-fowl clustered, looming in the mist almost as large as small islands themselves.

The navigation of the Strait of Georgia from Nanaimo to Comox in a thick fog is not easy, and more than once we passed painfully close to an ugly-looking rock. The skipper of our craft was an oldish man and a nervous. Of course, we had to crawl, at times going so slowly that we hardly seemed to make any progress ; and on my begging to be put on shore at Qualicum, the landing-place for Alberni, I was told that I should be landed if the fog did not prevent our sighting the bay. My idea was to land at Qualicum, whence a trail goes through the forest to the settlement at the head of the Alberni canal. The settlement is an agricultural one, occupying one of the few spots on Vancouver sufficiently clear for cultivation ; but an eighteen-mile trail to the coast must be a sad bar to the prosperity of these forest farmers.

From Alberni I had intended to strike out for the great central lake, on which I expected to find wapiti. The chief difficulty in my way was that of getting to Alberni, as there is no one living now at Qualicum ; and, even if the trail had been sufficiently clear for me to find it, eighteen miles would have been a long tramp with such a load as I had to carry. Conceive my horror then,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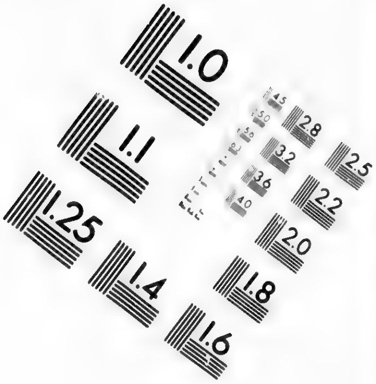
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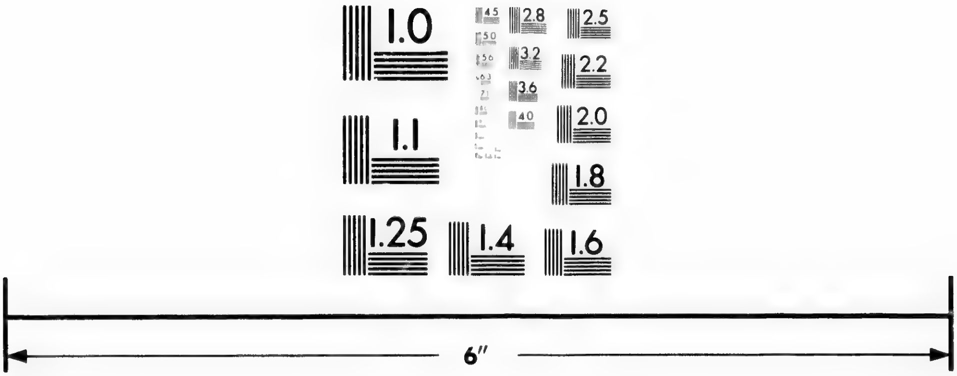
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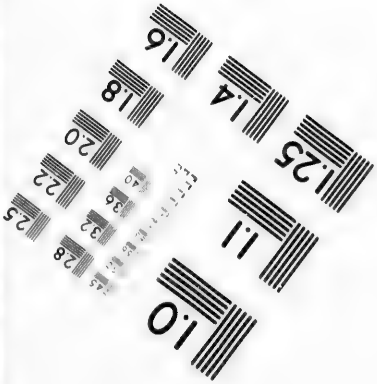
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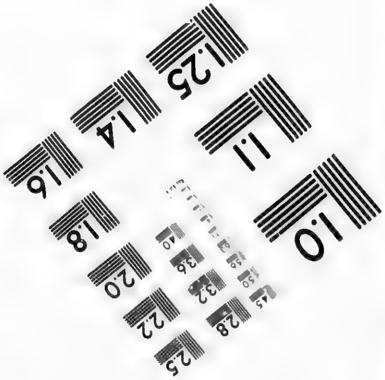
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when, as we neared the bay, the captain came to tell me that he could not find my Indian anywhere. On board the *Maude* there is little space to hide a stowaway, and a personal inspection convinced me that though he had left his blankets behind him, my captive had escaped. Here then I was baffled again, and had to resign myself to fate, hoping to make a fresh start from Comox.

The fog grew from bad to worse, and time would have hung heavily on my hands had my fellow-passengers been less interesting than they were. Amongst them were Englishmen who had come out to Vancouver six-and-twenty years ago, in the time of the gold-craze, and when that had passed away, had settled along the coast, living a wild, free life. Deer were always plentiful in Vancouver, as they are, indeed, to-day; so they shot their own venison, caught trout from every brook, speared salmon in the season, found abundance of clams on the shore and berries in the bush, extracted oil for their lamps from the dog-fish, and for the most part took to themselves temporary wives from among the natives, who might 'mend them, tend them,' and teach them the ways of bush-life. Nearly all of these old pioneers have been gold-miners, and the fever is far from dead in their breasts yet. Most of them know of some 'claim' in the mountains, which, if properly worked, would make a whole nation of millionnaires. Some of them have known what it is to earn 2,000 dols. a week; still more have worked for six months in such places as Alaska without ever seeing flour or finding gold.

One man I met had been one of a party which had gone up into Alaska to prospect. For six months they lived entirely on fish and game, never tasting bread all that time. At last, when success seemed almost within their grasp, they could stand the hardship no longer. Some had died, others were dying; none were well, and all were, as they tersely put it, 'beaten down to bed-rock.' So they built and manned a canoe, in which they made a journey of 500 miles, getting back to their fellow-men destitute of all but life and their canoe. Very few such men seem to have had a persistent run of ill-luck ; most of them have ‘struck it’ once or twice, but the money comes too suddenly, and finds its wings at once. Such of these mining adventurers as I met were, however, as different from the miner of romance as is the Vancouver Indian from Mr. Fenimore Cooper’s Delaware.

These fellow-travellers of mine were not men with big oaths in their mouths, starved desperation in their faces, and a couple of six-shooters in their belts; but only quiet rugged men, with tanned hides and cheery faces, which looked like indexes of kindly hearts, and their only weapons a bundle of mysterious iron implements somewhere in the steerage.

The men who are perhaps best informed about the settlers and their affairs along this coast are the stewards, pursers, and such like of the small steamers plying up the straits. At every port they have business to transact, and money-lending to impecunious settlers seems to pay better than the office of ship's steward. They are anxious to advise passengers as to investments, and act no doubt as amateur estate agents. But whilst I am writing of these matters we have been slowly creeping along the coast; have picked up a boat containing an Indian who is supposed to know the strait well, and who is now advising with our half-distracted captain.

All round us are small islands and big rocks; and so clear and shallow is the water, that I can actually count the rays of a star-fish lying on the bottom. All at once there is a cry, and we go slowly on to a big rock with a bump which throws us off our feet. Luckily the little boat went straight at the obstacle, caught the blow in her strongest part, and did herself no harm. After this interest in the navigation of the ship increased, as did the fog; and when we made Comox, 154 miles from Victoria, we were sincerely thankful, though we had to knock about for an hour in harbour before we could find our way to the landing-stage, notwithstanding a system of signals which we kept up with those on shore. At Comox I was lucky enough to secure the services of the policeman, 'Joe Rodello,' an Italian, who speaks English, French, Chinook, and other varieties of the human tongue, drives a fur-trade with the tribes in his vicinity, takes care of the church, and is the best man for any wandering English sportsman to confide in.

A really good hotel, built entirely of timber by its present proprietor, Mr. Fitzpatrick (who, in spite of his name, is not an Irishman), and kept as clean as a new pin by his good wife, affords capital accommodation of a rough sort, but so good of its kind that ladies who care to accompany their husbands on their shooting expeditions might do worse than put up there.

Unluckily for me, the house was undergoing repairs, so that only one room was available for visitors, and that was just then occupied by a lady and gentleman from Victoria, so that I had to put myself in the hands of the police for the night, and a very fair cell old 'Joe' gave me, with the local law-court on one side of me, and the church on the other. Both these establishments are under 'Joe's' roof.

Comox is one of the great farming points on Vancouver, and settlements and clearings stretch back for some distance inland along what is, I believe, the Courtney river. Comox is also believed to be a coal district, and has the advantage of being a fairly flat land, though too densely timbered for farming operations of any great extent as yet.

Unfortunately for me, I had another difficulty to overcome at Comox, on which I had not counted; of which, indeed, I had not heard. At Nanaimo the Indians were busy working; here they were busier playing. The particular nature of their entertainment was a 'potlatch,' or 'potlash.' I cannot quite tell how the word should be spelt; nor, indeed, did even the omniscient 'Joe' seem to have a very clear conception of what a 'potlash' was. He said he had been amongst these Indians and others almost all his life, and had shared in many such entertainments, but had never quite understood them yet.

As the day after my arrival at Comox was as foggy as ever, I decided to try to see something of this mysterious affair, and persuaded 'Joe' to take me out to the ranches in the afternoon, hoping, at the same time, to hear of a man above 'potlashing,' who would act as my guide. The ranche is a good way out of the village of Comox, and the way to it leads through a thick forest, in which the ugly grey fog made everything hideous, and dropped dismally from the fir-woods.

London in November is bad enough, but a four days' fog which shuts out sun and landscape entirely, from dawn to nightfall, is almost too bad for London, and sufficient to depress any spirits.

No wonder that when in the last week of 1883 the sunshine recorded at Greenwich was 'nil,' the crime-list for that week contained 153 murders and suicides.

A light flickering through the boards of the ranche, and the sound of Indian music (!), banished our gloomy thoughts as we emerged from the forest. The ranches stand along the shore, a long line of canoes drawn up at the water's edge below them, and several highly coloured effigies keep guard over the houses. These idols, which the Vancouver Indians set up, seem to obtain very little reverence from their owners; for as we approached, one was doing admirable service as an extempore Aunt Sally for a crowd of small boys, and another had an even worse billet. The door of the ranche was a large board, designed like a bird of many colours and quaint shape, through which, about two feet six from the ground, a circular hole gave a visitor of moderate bulk a chance of an uneasy and ungraceful entry into the ranche.

Roughly speaking, it seems a ‘potlash’ is an entertainment lasting any time from a week to three months, provided by one tribe for another, and entailing on the tribe so entertained the duty of receiving their hosts in like manner on some future occasion, generally at the same date in the succeeding year.

Still, a ‘potlash’ is not merely a feast, but a season for the settlement of all debts, and above all the occasion for innumerable gifts. These gifts are made only by the hosts, and though apparently free gifts, the acceptance of them imposes on the ‘donees’ the duty of returning them with considerable interest to the ‘donors’ at their next merry meeting. He who can afford to give the finest gifts obtains a recognised social position; and, indeed, ‘Joe’ assured me that chieftainship was attained in this way. I tried very hard to understand the whole system, and to see who got any benefit out of the gifts except the traders who sold the blankets; but I was obliged to give it up, and shall content myself with relating what I saw.

As we neared the ranche, a flood of light and a babel of sounds proceeding from the interior of the building informed us that the ceremony had begun.

In the usually dim wilderness of mud floor three great fires blazed; piles of dry salmon, long canoe-shaped troughs filled with flour, seething caldrons filled with blocks of meat, and pyramids of new blankets, told a story of plenty, and gave promise of 'high old times' for the assembled tribes. And yet many white men still remember when the Indians, even of Nanaimo, worked willingly for three tobacco-leaves per diem.

On one side of the fires, squatting on the sleeping-shelves which lined the wall, were the visitors, passive spectators, so far, of the scene. Opposite to them stood the men of

Comox drawn up four deep, each two ranks facing inwards, and supporting on the left hand a rough plank, on which they beat time to a monotonous chant with a small fagot of wood. None of the Indians were in gala costume, and my guide told me that they never paid much attention to dress, even on the greatest occasions. After the chorus of board-thumpers had chanted themselves hoarse and worked themselves into a violent state of heat and excitement, a 'cluchman,' or woman, in a bright cloak of Birmingham manufacture, stood up in front of the men, and began dancing a *pas seul* in time to the chant, holding out her arms with the elbows kept close to her sides, the hands expanded and held palm downwards. In this constrained attitude she continued to dance, turning slowly to the left and then back again to the right, never doing more than half a turn, and never leaving the spot on which she first stood up. I watched her at first with interest, increased by the fact that the firelight that glowed on her swarthy face revealed no trace of animation there, her expression never varying, any more than dance or tune; but by degrees interest grew to a painful sort of fascination as this nightmare of a woman kept slowly revolving, never changing in anything and never seeming to tire.

I can't tell which gave in first, the band or the dancer. I was becoming too giddy to watch either much longer, and began to feel as if I was in the hands of a mesmerist, or was the subject of some satanic incantation. Noiselessly the woman ceased from among us, and a stillness which seemed unnatural reigned in place of the chant of the thumpers. Then arose a man of Comox, and another from Alberni kept his eye on him. He of Comox was a species of public recorder, and the Alberni man was there to check his accounts.

In the tones of a London milkman the recorder commenced a recital of the gifts made at the last 'potlash' by the men of Alberni to those of Comox. How he kept his accounts I don't know. He had no book to refer to, but as he never suffered correction I presume he was pretty accurate. As the bill against the hosts was a very long one, and likely to occupy the attention of the house for the rest of the night, my guide and I slipped quietly away at this point in the proceedings.

Outside the ranches one generally sees amongst the groups of children a large proportion whose fair skins bespeak their mixed race. What becomes of the poor little fellows brought up in the filth and ignorance of a fishing Indian's camp I don't know, but I hope the priest looks after them. As far as Rodello knew, the Indians about this coast have very crude notions of religion. They believe in a God, and look for some one to come, as the Jews look for a Messiah, and amongst them the priests of the Romish Church have most success, the Indians believing little in missionaries of other churches, whose dress is as the dress of laymen, and whose ritual is so simple that their whole religion appears to these savages like a book without pictures to an infant, uninteresting and incomprehensible. Is the increasing gorgousness of our English ritual, especially in London, a token of the approach of our second childhood, I wonder?

As we strolled back to my lodging, old Joe told me of one or two 'potlashes' in which he had assisted in old days; and amongst quaint doings of which he told, one pretty custom has fixed itself in my memory.

When the last night of the revels had come, and the wild dancers had worn themselves out with their efforts—when the grey of morning was in the skies, and the embers of the fires were dying out and growing dim, a young Indian girl-child, stationed on the roof above the dancers, bent forward and reached out towards them with little arms through a breach in the roof. As they caught sight of her, with wild yells they leapt up towards her; with the energy of the last flames of the dying fire, chiefs and saiwashes frantically competed to reach the little arms extended from above. But the roof was too high, the beckoning arms too far; the dancers' energies had already been spent in the revels, and they sank back tired with futile effort; the arms were withdrawn; the last flame dropped back into the dead embers; unbroken darkness and weariness remained. The time was not yet, and the hope of their tribe still unrevealed.

The next day I spent in buying camp necessaries and procuring a canoe for my Indian and myself. All day long Joe's store was full of Indian purchasers, bartering deer-skins for calico and tobacco. Joe is one of the last of the fur-traders in this part of the world; and though he buys skins cheaply enough, he complains that the trade pays him very poorly, the number of skins brought in by the natives being so small. This is not because the beasts of the forest are less numerous than they were. but simply that high wages for fishing, lumbering, and mining have put the Indians out of conceit with the less remunerative and harder life of the hunter.

Six years ago Comox Indians would work for 2s. a-day, or less; now they won't always work for 12s. The half-bred Iroquois engaged by me as gillie was working for 2 dols. 50 cents per diem on the wharf when I engaged him, and he subsequently assured me that he had at times earned double that in the lumbering-camps. True, he was an exceptionally good man with his axe; but any man, however poor a creature he may be, can earn his 1 dol. 50 cents per diem. The Indians' great harvest-time is during the sealing season, which lasts for about six weeks or two months. The seal, of course, is the valuable fur-seal; and all the best men of the island are at work during that six weeks in their canoes on the west coast.

In 1882, Rodello assured me that, being in Victoria when the Indians returned from the sealing, he saw two of them spend at one store upwards of 900 dols. 'inside of no time,' as he expressed it; while the whole town was invaded by the redskins dressed in their best, driving about the main streets in hired carriages, singing and making quite a grand demonstration. The trade-price for a seal-skin from the hunter is 4 dols.; and as some of them kill as many as ten seals a day, it is easy to see that their profits must be enormous.

The specimens of the redmen which I saw at Joe's store were dressed, both men and women, in semi-European garb—rough flannel shirts and canvas trousers put on loosely, with a dirty towel, coloured woollen scarf, or brilliant bandanna round his lank black hair, forming the costume of the filthy 'saiwash' (man); while a gaudy chintz dress, opened to show some appalling linen on the chest, and long dishevelled tresses, uncovered and unconfined, completed the attractions of his filthier spouse. All spoke Chinook, a mongrel language, formerly introduced by the Hudson Bay traders, compounded of English and French grafted on some Indian stock.

The red men of British Columbia seem to be thoroughly well treated, are very quiet and harmless, and put the greatest confidence in the law, which protects them in their rights as thoroughly as it does white men. Indeed some of the settlers seem to think that Indian reservations are only too well protected, since much of the small area of good agricultural land in Vancouver is reserved to the Indians, who, being a race of idlers and of fishers, make no use of the valuable land, which they prevent others utilizing. On the second night of my stay at Comox, Joe and I went up again to the ranche, hoping to see something of the dances of the potlash. But there was some hitch in the proceedings, and the opening dance had been postponed till the next day.

Meanwhile the hosts and guests were arranged against each other in a grand gamble, and this was how they did it. Last night's boards now lay across the knees of the rival ranks squatting on opposite sides of the big fire. The same incessant thumping which had deafened us last night was being indulged in with renewed vigour on the second occasion; while two men of one side, holding wooden dice in either hand, passed and repassed them across and across their chests and from hand to hand with such enthusiastic vigour that the perspiration streamed down their faces, while they and all their sides chaunted in time to the dice-holder's hands with a nervous energy that seemed dangerous.

All this while the other party kept their eyes intently fixed on the dice, until one of the watchers thought he had discovered the whereabouts of the marked die, whereupon he arrested the shuffler's hands by a silent sign, and if successful took from the shuffler's side a small bundle of faggots used as counters, or in case of failure paid the same over to him. Until a correct guess had been made the original shufflers stuck to the dice; but as soon as the marked die was discovered the other side became shufflers.

I smoked a couple of pipes whilst watching this game, and then, having emptied my pouch and exhausted my patience, I left and saw no more of the Comox potlash. A curious kind of rattle is used by these Vancouver Indians, to mark the time in the potlash dances; it is the property only of a great chief, and is used by him only on these state occasions. It seems a quaint idea that the host should himself act as Master of Ceremonies and band at one and the same time. The carvings on these rattles are believed to represent a concise history of the tribe to which the Chief belongs, and the medicine-men of the tribe are able to decipher their meanings.

V.

'PADDLING OUR OWN CANOE.'

It was nine before I could get my Indian and his canoe down to the Comox wharf, in spite of all my early rising. But the day spent in waiting had won some reward, for the fog which had wrapped the whole land so long was now rapidly breaking up, and giving us glimpses of the outside world and our long-lost friend the sun. Many a time before I have started on a shooting expedition with less than a quarter of the luxuries which I had gathered round me on this occasion; but then never before had I been in a land where all the ways are water-ways, and the conveyances canoes, untiring and up to any weight.

Our canoe lay off the wharf—a long, roomy boat, large enough for twelve men, and once, I believe, the property of Sir Thomas Hesketh. It was just as well, I thought, to have a big canoe, as I intended to make rather an extended cruise, and wanted something stable enough to carry sail in a fair wind. My Indian was a fairly civilized half-breed—that is, half Iroquois and half coast Indian—who spoke excellent English and used an axe to perfection. If anyone should wish to shoot or fish where I shot and fished, they will be well advised to take Louis with them. When we had carried down flour and frying-pans, pots and kettles, axes and bedding, and all the other etcetera of camp-life, I suggested to my man that his squaw, who had brought the canoe round from the ranche, had better step out and say good-bye, as it was time to start. To my horror I found she was to go with us, and take a big dog with her to take care of her. Under any other circumstances I should have

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been resolute in my objections to this course of action, but what could I do? Louis was the only Indian who could be lured from the pleasures of the potlash. For all one knew, the potlash might go on until Christmas, and as he was but newly betrothed and anxious to marry the woman, nothing would persuade my henchman to leave her behind to be tempted by his companions and rivals during this season of Indian carnival.

Poor fellow! He had been married once or twice already (he was only twenty-six when he told the story), and betrothed very much oftener; but, as he remarked with a mournful shake of his head, a man who had his bread to earn could not always have his eye on a young woman, and a wife would not be tied up like a dog to a tree, so they all went wrong.

However, if he had not made a home for himself yet, he had made something out of each matrimonial venture; as, though on entering into the bonds of betrothal or matrimony he had been obliged to deposit some marriage-gift with his charmer's father, he, on the other hand, got his own again with very considerable interest on the dissolution of the marriage-tie.

In talking over camp-life in the West, my acquaintances had always insisted that the acme of camp-comfort could only be attained by taking to yourself a tawny helpmate of the weaker sex, whose willing work for her white lord would more than compensate for the absence of all the host of home servants. Alas! this, I fear, is only another delusion. Louis's wife, at any rate, did nothing but eat and make herself a nuisance by splashing water at her spouse in her few waking moments with a spare paddle. She couldn't cook—at least, she never tried to; she never washed even her own person; she could not paddle; and when, weary with a hard day's work, we landed to make camp, she just squatted on her haunches and watched us, or played with the dog. I don't think I ever grew to hate anyone as I did that dirty female bundle of rags and humanity.

As I was anxious to make the journey to Salmon river in as short a time as possible, I suggested to Louis that if he would teach me, I would learn to paddle, and assist him as much as possible; and to this end I began digging away merrily at the quiet water. Canoes, especially big ones with few paddlers, do not fly through the water in real life; on the contrary, with the stream against you, it seems to take an endless time to round any given promontory, and the promontory on which I had fixed as the end of my first essay in paddling took about half an hour to reach. Proud of my success, I indulged in an easy and lit a pipe. To my horror Louis did the same, and in about an hour I awoke to the certainty that as long as I paddled Louis might be expected to do the same; but when I stopped, the canoe did.

Cape Mudge was said to be a day's paddle from Comox, and Salmon river a day from

Cape Mudge; and so they are if you have a good wind all the way, which of course we had not. The fog, which was now leaving us, seemed to have turned into rain, and pattered drearily on the water all day; but a wet shirt matters little if the arms inside it are hard at work the while. On the first headland which we rounded was an Indian graveyard, full of hideous wooden gods or devils, standing guard over the buried chiefs. Rougher workmanship than they displayed is rarely seen, but in the mist and rain they were gloomily effective.

Except for the pleasure that one always gets out of real hard work, that first day from Comox was not a very cheery one. No shores visible for the most part, and no life moving near us except the gulls sitting in rows by the edge of the graveyard, or a ghostly-looking loon exaggerated by the mist. Once a seal took it into his head to follow us, but he was not an unsophisticated beast by any means, and refused to give us a fair chance at his round shiny head with our rifles. The liveliest things were the salmon, whose silvery forms leapt incessantly round the canoe, taking three or four springs into the air and then disappearing.

As evening drew in, supper began to be talked about; and as we had trusted to fish for food, it became necessary to set about catching our salmon. Wherever a stream ran out of the maple woods, that fringed the shore with a density of forest growth that appeared to deny ingress to the interior, there the salmon were thickest, struggling desperately to get up into the fresh water. On the shallow, with a torch and a spear, I fancy I could soon have procured my fish; but we had no torch, and so we had to content ourselves with a spoon-bait attached to a cable that, in an angler's hands, would have sufficed to hold a whale.

For some time the spoon revolved fruitlessly in our wake, until I began to despair of our supper; but a furious tug gave a brighter turn to my thoughts, and I began gleefully to play my first salmon. To my astonishment, the brute never showed above water once, but sailed backwards and forwards under the canoe with the sullen stubbornness of a big pike rather than the mad rush of the king of game fish.. But sullen or not, the strain began to tell on him, and, trusting to my tackle, I drew him up towards the boat. Surely this was no salmon—this long, evil-looking fish writhing through the water, and followed in every turn by another the exact counterpart of himself. Louis laughed outright at my face of disappointment, as I hoisted a very vigorous dog-fish on board, and sent him in again minus his liver and his life. The liver is kept by the natives for the sake of the oil they extract from it, which I am told does duty in England as 'pure cod-liver oil.'

Three or four more dog-fish were caught thus, accompanied in almost every case by their friends and relatives to the very surface of the water, and then we reached Oyster

Bay, our first night's camping-ground, where an acre or so of black sand free from timber gave us room for an encampment near the edge of a river's mouth. There were lots of duck about, but I had brought no gun with me; and though a flock of brent geese came in to the fresh water for the night, it was too dark to shoot them with a rifle. So smoked salmon with bread, and a cup of very brackish brandy and water, had to suffice us; and as it was very late, we did not trouble to make a regular camp.

If it had not been that a species of sand-hopper, with the shape of a shrimp and the liveliness of a flea, was stirred into unusual activity by our fires, I should have been well content with my flour-bag for a pillow and the sail for an awning. But this was our first and last experience of short commons on the coast of Vancouver, for soon after the geese of Oyster Bay had left for the open water, Louis and I had paddled away with our little wooden shovels into waters alive with salmon. It seemed a sin to kill such glorious fish with such coarse tackle, but I had only that or a trout-cast; and, as most men know, the salmon of these waters are so far behind the times that they do not appreciate the beauties of a fly. Round Cape Mudge especially, we had excellent sport, though the salmon were most of them small, from eight to fourteen pounds being about their ordinary weight.

Towards midday we reached the Cape, but here the current was so strong that we were obliged to land and await the turn of the tide, having already lost two of our four spoons in big fish. Where we landed, part of a tribe of Indians were busy at the dog-fishery, and for a mile before we reached their canoes the water was white with the upturned bellies of their liverless victims. Five or six canoes had just come in when we arrived, full to the brim with dog-fish. On the shore, squaws and old men were busy extracting the livers and storing them in buckets, tossing back the bodies into the water as they finished cleaning them.

The way the Indians catch the dog-fish is by spearing the fish as they sail about near the surface. Near the encampment we passed a second kind of graveyard, very different from that at Comox. At Mudge the graves were made in the form of lean-to huts of planks covered with white linen, with here and there an idol set up as sentinel of the cemetery. Wherever the Mudge Indians had been located along the shore, piles of clam-shells were heaped up, and other piles of echidna (I think English country-folk call them sea-eggs), some like those of England in size, but covered with grass-green spikes, and others larger than a man's two fists, of a rich purple. The roof was off the ranche, and no one had lived in it for some time; but

'You may break, you may ruin the vase if you will,
The scent of the roses will cling to it still:'

and no matter how long a coast Indian has left his home, the foul smell of his haunts and the putrefying débris on his deserted floors bear witness to a filth and untidiness which none but a red-skin could live through. I thought Asiatics were dirty, but I had never realized what dirt might be until I saw a Vancouver Indian's ranche.

At Mudge, an old acquaintance gladdened us by his return—the sun at last fairly vanquishing the fog and bringing out all the glories of golden forest, gleaming water and the flashing silver of leaping salmon, in such a way as almost to compensate for our enforced delay. Towards two o'clock we paddled across from Cape Mudge to the mouth of Campbell river, in the wake of a very scantily clad old gentleman who was removing his house, roof and 'fixings' and all, from the dog-fishery to the permanent camp.

At Campbell river a tribe of Flat-heads is encamped, living for the most part on the swarming shoals of salmon which are perpetually trying to ascend the river. Here we found Charlie, my second Indian, who had just returned from a successful seal-hunt along the coast of Bute Inlet, having bagged five seals (hair-seals, not fur-seals) in the week. If seal-hunting had been my object in cruising about the shores of Vancouver, I could have had no better man with me than Charlie; but as a hunter on land he was absolutely useless, the fact being that these fishing Indians know nothing at all about hunting, and are afraid of being lost in the wood like very children. Demons, they say, dwell in the lonely places, and the cry of certain birds (owls, I believe) will give them agonies of terror. These Campbell river Indians were inclined to make extremely hard terms with me, having recently secured a cash-box from a steamer which was burnt somewhere near Campbell river, and so being very flush of money. I saw one fellow with a wide-awake hat full of coins, most of which bore the mark of fire upon them.

An early camp, with a supper of grouse (killed with a rifle-ball) and salmon-steaks ended our second day, after I had put the men through a sort of camp-drill, erecting the tents, making beds, and cleaning fish and game in the most approved fashion. A less inquisitive set of savages I never saw than those amongst whom I was camping. In the Caucasus a babel of talk would have deafened me until I had turned in for the night, and a crowd of inquisitive friends hampered my movements.

Here, dogs and Indians squatted silently in a circle for a short time watching the strangers, and then one by one disappeared and went about their own business. A lazier life no men could lead than these fellows.

Their ranche is built on a clear spot near the river's mouth, where drift-wood and fallen timber lies thick within a dozen paces of their doors. From this they chop abundant fuel; the sea is full of food for them, and the least possible industry will secure them dog-fish oil or deer-skins enough to purchase blankets, the only other necessaries of their simple lives.

Except for the fishing, I never saw an Indian man or woman do a single stroke of honest work.

Vancouver would be a splendid place for the British poaching rough; he could loaf and idle to his heart's content, beat his wife to death, or nearly so, if he had a mind to, and always have enough to eat. The only charm wanting would be, that as the game is free to all and no one keeps poultry, he could not conveniently commit theft. My friend Charlie, I subsequently discovered, had been indulging in wife-beating to such an extent that he was confined in prison (I think at Yale); but he broke that, as he did his wife's head, and is now in full enjoyment of his freedom.

On Sunday, with the extra man and the cheering influence of sunlight, we made a good run and got to Salmon river early in the afternoon; though, oddly enough, we saw no game on the way.

As a rule, in the early morning, my men told me, you could hardly escape seeing a deer or two along the shore in the little grassy patches that occur from time to time. Between Campbell and Salmon rivers is an extremely beautiful and dangerous rapid, known as Seymour's Narrows, which is only navigable for small craft at slack-tide.

A cluster of tiny islands, with bold lichen-covered walls of dark rock, press into the deep and dark waters of the narrows. A few pines, and the quaintly-twisted forms of the red-barked arbutus-trees, grow on these islands, and in their shelter ducks seem to have found their earthly paradise. Where the water runs darkest and deepest under the overhanging rocks, I got hold of something which nearly pulled me out of the canoe. I had the end of the line round my thigh, thinking there would be less chance of a breakage so than if the line was hitched on to one of the seats.

Whatever the fish was which took my last spoon, he very speedily ran out all my spare line, and snapped the strong twine as if it had been a single horsehair. Luckily we had already fish enough for a day or two, and before that time had expired we hoped for venison. Two unfortunate little racoons, who were sunning themselves on a log, roused the sporting instincts of my men, and a lively hunt ensued, the coons taking to the roots of some big trees, and refusing for a long time to be ejected.

But the dog-fish were the features of that day's journey. They were simply in thousands. All over the still surface of the water we kept seeing what I mistook at first for flocks of birds, swimming rapidly about. A nearer approach showed these to be not flocks of birds, but of dog-fish, their tall dorsal fins projecting above the surface as they raced to and fro among the countless millions of herrings, with which the strait seemed full.

Charlie amused himself by spearing the dog-fish instead of paddling, and so clever was he in the use of his two-pronged stick (on which he did not take the trouble to mount the spear-heads), that he speared two fish at once with it, and shaking them off, secured another immediately. In fact, with this simple stick he could spear fish as fast as he could have strung beads.

Whilst trying to bale out some herring with a landing-net, my arm being immersed to the shoulder, a cold body struck hard against my hand, causing me to withdraw it sharply. Putting my hand in a second time, I saw my enemy, a big dog-fish, turn over and come at me again; but as this time Charlie was watching, the brute came off second best.

The people of Victoria are not blind as to the enormous wealth of their waters, and a company was formed, I understand, for the purpose of expressing the oil from the herrings which teem here at certain seasons; and not only do the fish supply oil, but their bodies also, when properly dried, form an excellent substitute for guano. This business occupies a prominent place in the programme of that extraordinary craft, *Spratt's Ark*, a vessel built in such a way that while being in itself a complete cannery, it is able not only to accommodate its own *employés*, but to cruise about from place to place, and enjoy the best part of the salmon-run on a dozen different stations.

Nothing catches the eye more in canoeing up these fiords (and fiords they are in all but the richness of their forest-fringes) than the fields of enormous sea-wrack which, floating on the surface, show by the direction of their tresses which way the tide is setting.

Nothing I ever saw seemed to me so suggestive of mermaids as these long slender-bodied weeds, swaying their bodies in the transparent waves, their gleaming round heads in some cases almost as large as a cocoanut, and their streaming tresses from six to twelve feet long.

The Indians declare that some of these sea-wrack stalks are 150 feet long, but I never saw any of that length myself. The thick ends of them are used by the natives to carry water in, and the whole stalk makes excellent and pliable water-pipes.

Keeping close in to shore, so as to take advantage of the still shoal water, we could watch the varied life at the bottom of the strait. Star fish of several hues, and furnished with points varying from five to twenty-five, cover the sea-floor. I never heard that the almost omnivorous 'saiwash' eats these, but Charlie's eye soon detected a far more loathly-looking creature, which was to him as green turtle fat to the epicure. A great pink squid, sprawling in happy ignorance, was what caused Charlie and Louis so much excitement; and it took a quarter of an hour of severe prodding and lifting before the tenacious beast could be hauled, a bruised lump of jelly, off his rock into the bottom of the boat. In my anxiety to learn all things, I had intended to taste the fish when cooked; but I was too late, unfortunately, the greedy cooks having eaten every morsel of the squid before I got on the scene.

There are very few white settlements between Comox and Salmon river. I only remember noticing two or three, and these were, I fancy, only single families, and all on the Comox side of Cape Mudge. As a matter of fact the coast of Vancouver's Island is too thickly timbered for farming, and the price of labour is so prohibitive that it does not pay to clear.

About three o'clock, when our arms and backs were almost worn out with incessant toil at the paddles, we turned the corner of the island, and at the same time noticed the drifts of white mist high up amongst the pines, sailing our way. For the first time during our four days' voyage we hoisted our sail, and revelled in the sensation of rapid motion towards the desired goal without any effort on our part.

The mouth of Salmon river is broad and shallow; the village, of three big barracks, lying some little distance up the left bank—enormous blazoned poles in front of each barrack. The river seemed full of the whitened bodies of dead and dying salmon—'humpies,' as my half-breed called them. The poor beasts, too weak to avoid the paddle, almost half-blind and stupid, are a pitiable sight, and a revolting one. I don't think the Indians eat them in this state, though of this I am not sure; but at any rate Bruin does, and looks forward to the 'humpy season' as his great annual fête.

Oddly enough, dogs suffer tremendously here (at least they do in Washington Territory, and, I believe, here too) from what the people call 'salmon sickness,' brought on by their first meal of this fish—whether the fish be in a healthy state or a 'humpy.' If, however, they recover from their first sickness, they can eat salmon for the rest of their lives with impunity.

As for Salmon River Settlement, it consisted, when we arrived on the scene, of two old men with ragged shirts down to their waists, half a dozen hideous crones, and some few Indian brats of tender years. But it struck me that in all the ranches, children were comparatively scarce. For one thing only I bless the memory of Salmon River Ranche—to wit, that we got rid there of Louis's wife and dog.

It was still fairly early in the afternoon when we started up the river, and then the best part of my shooting trip began. The river was a perfect colour for fishing, and after clearing the first rapid the shallows under the drooping cedars were just within casting-distance on either side of the canoe. Of course I soon set aside the spoon-bait and rope-like line which we had been using, and put up a fly on a light trout-cast.

Some old flies, used years ago in Norway, served my turn; but as the fish seemed to prefer bright colours and only to take the wet fly, I deeply regretted that I had not brought a 'Francis Francis' fly with me. I think that would suit the big sea-trout in Vancouver to a nicety. As it was, I had nothing to complain of; and before I had reached the top of the first big bend of the stream I had lifted a brace and a half of beautiful fish, from 2 to 4 lb. weight, into the bottom of the canoe. The colours of these beauties were less warm than those of our river-trout, but their silver and green sides of glistening dappled malachite were superb.

As for the scenery in this angler's paradise, I can only say it is such as Izaak Walton might have seen in visions, had he been an opium-eater. Long bright reaches of shallow water, with gleaming gravel bottom, bounded by cool dark shadows under overhanging woods, whose foliage was now golden with the dying glories of the maple-leaf, now tender russet-red and soft dark green evenly mixed on the boughs of the gigantic cedar. Then the stream twisted, and there were rapids, with dark pools here and there under a boldly-projecting rock or behind the submerged root of some fallen forest giant, in which far down we could see the salmon lying: too far down, worse luck! for our spears to reach them.

Here and there on a blasted pine, or high up on some bare piece of rock, we saw the great bald-headed eagle, sated probably with salmon, or if not that, so bold that one big fellow let me step out of my rocking canoe knee-deep into the stream, and take a deliberate shot at him with my rifle. All the birds seemed tame and careless of man's approach.

A couple of brent geese waddled quietly out on to a spit of land not a hundred yards ahead of us, and sat staring until my rifle turned one of them over. What with these and a wild duck, my rifle did the work of a fowling-piece that day.

Unfortunately, before long the stream became in places too strong for paddling, and then a new misery, in the shape of poling, began. It took a very short time to convince me that more time was lost in fishing me out of the stream after an ill-judged lunge at the bottom, than was likely to be gained by the services I rendered whenever my pole did manage to reach the bottom. So I sat still and fished, killing one splendid fellow nearly 4½ lb. in a deep swirl under a rock, where, what with the strength of the fish and the strength of the water, it took me a good twelve minutes to get him into my net.

On weighing my fish at the end of the day, I found the average weight to be about 2½ lb. All the way up stream two species of birds were our constant companions, a little blue-grey dipper and the crested kingfisher; but as the general reader is not, I suppose, a naturalist, I will spare him a recital of their quaint ways.

Here and there we came on a fleet of

sawbills (mergansers); but ducks we saw none. From time to time we landed, but the whole of that first day we came across no game-tracks whatever, and it was with a feeling of some disappointment that I landed on a low sand-spit, and prepared to camp.

But boiled salmon-trout, with whisky and water, in an earthly paradise, would dissipate most men's blues; and as I lay on my back and smoked, I wondered why men who could afford moors in Scotland did not sometimes equip a perfect canoe to carry themselves, camp-outfit, and, if they liked, their wives, and enjoy for a month or two the perfection of foreign trout-fishing, and the most lovely river scenery in the world.

I say 'foreign trout-fishing' advisedly; for to anyone who really loves the angle, I can't help thinking that English fishing on a well-fished stream, where trout are foemen worthy of your steel, is far and away the best.

The second day up the river brought us in view of game-tracks. Here and there were patches of sand, or a clump of cotton-wood trees, with soft soil round them, in which we detected the tracks of a bear or two and some wolves, and at last, to my intense delight, the great hoof-marks of an elk.

Oh yes! I know, Mr. Critic, I ought to call the beast a wapiti; but as no one calls it anything but elk out in the land in which it lives, I shall, with your leave, call it elk too.

To my surprise I was spared the only thing I had looked forward to with dread during my cruise; for not one single mosquito, gnat, or other obnoxious insect, buzzed its war-note in my ear on Salmon river. The only difficulty we encountered on our way up stream was that of getting through the occasional barrier of fallen pine-trees which from time to time blocked up the river. When we met these things Louis and his axe came to our rescue, and hewed a way through the solid timber; but it was a long job, and weary waste of time.

Towards the evening of the second day we reached the mouth of a small tributary stream of Salmon river; and here, as the stream was small, we determined to cache our canoe and start thence inland next morning, with light packs, in hope of finding a prairie country and elk somewhere near. As it was still early, I left the men to cache the canoe and make the camp, while I strolled off into the woods, which crowded down dim and dense to the very edge of the stream.

So thick are these Vancouver forests that in places a man can hardly pass through them, and the perpetual recurrence of tracts of fallen timber make the going difficult and risky; for what at first appears the ordinary bottom of the forest, turns out as you tread on it to be a mere platform of logs, so overgrown and interlaced that you may be tumbling from three to ten feet through them with a broken leg almost before you realize what you have been walking on.

Now and again the broad stem of a fallen giant gives you 150 feet of splendid wooden road; but arrived at the end you find you have been gradually ascending, and now stand on what the Americans would call a 'jump off,' with a mass of brush below you, hiding, in all probability, a collection of logs, or a pitfall which, coming at the bottom of such a jump, would end your ramble for that day.

The chief part of the brush is currant-bush, with a berry having the flavour of black-currant wood or leaves, and so covered with bloom as to appear grey. Under foot the large maiden-hair fern, which is the chief ornament of so many English greenhouses, grows in a cup-shape to your knees. Another fern of the polypod family shares the country with the maiden-hair, and together, if you can get them dry, they form no bad addenda to the young cedar twigs of which wise men in Vancouver's Island make their camp mattress.

I had not gone far from my men when Charlie came blundering after me, making noise enough to alarm the whole country-side, and begging me to come quickly and quietly back with him, as wolves had been seen crossing the river just below our encampment. Wading up the tributary thigh-deep, I reached a little island from which the opposite bank of the main stream was visible, where sat, not a wolf surely, but a splendid black colley dog. So full was I of this idea that it took half a minute to convince me that colleys were not likely to be roaming about Vancouver's Island, after which I took my shot, the first at big game since I had been in America. The result was ludicrous. The old wolf sat up and passed his paws over his ears and eyes as if washing his face, shook his head and bolted, while I performed an elaborate somersault backwards into the water, and though my shoulder was a good deal hurt, it was as nothing to my wounded feelings. I never knew my gunmaker send me a bad cartridge before, but if there were not two charges of powder in that one I am a Dutchman.

VI.

'ON THE TRAIL OF THE WAPITI.'

LET me try to recall every incident of those two early October days last year, connected in my mind with the best beast that ever fell to my rifle.

On Tuesday night, camped under one of the largest cedars I ever saw, with a sweet-smelling mattress of twigs from the boughs that made my canopy, I dozed away into dreamland, to the music of Salmon river and its vassal from Victoria Peak. Now and again the wolves woke the forest echoes with long-drawn howls, presumably of derision for the duffer who had attempted to molest one of their race.

The men were flitting about still when my eyes closed, busy with a big baking; and when I woke again, just at dawn, they were afoot before me, and everything except my own tent was stowed away. In a big cupboard amongst the cedar-roots we stored our food, and walled it in with boulders to protect it from bears or wolves. The canoe we left just as it was. No one was likely to meddle with that at the head of Salmon river. The sail we packed on Charlie's back with the bread, and so, with about 100 lb. of impedimenta distributed pretty evenly amongst us, we turned our backs on luxury and set off to find the prairies which men say exist near Victoria Peak. How any beast of the forest even finds his way in these regions of dense vegetation is a marvel to me. As for us men, we could mark now and again a higher peak than the rest, back in the interior; and towards this by sadly circuitous routes we steered, through such a tangled mesh of bush and fern and towering trees as surely exists nowhere else on earth. Tracks of game were few and not of recent date until we struck the river, and here we came upon a fairly fresh elk-track.

Gradually we seemed to get into the beaten roads of the game, and at last we were fairly launched on the trail of a big beast who had passed by not two days before us. Wherever the elk-track led we followed, and no man could have chosen more carefully the pleasant places and easy going than did our four-footed road-maker. Unfortunately he seemed to have a predilection for water, and fifty times a day, I should think, he crossed and recrossed the stream. Moccasins are splendid things for walking in on dry land, but anything more treacherous than a wet moccasin on stepping-stones the ingenuity of ill-luck has not devised.

With soaking jacket and aching bones, I meditated on these things; but as the trail grew fresher our pace quickened, and little miseries were forgotten. Towards afternoon the trail turned boldly up the side of the ridge, always going through thick brush, of course, but now adding a deep black bog underfoot to the ordinary difficulties of our way.

Heavy packs, a bog knee-deep, and a road that seemed steep as a back staircase, are trials; and we could not forget that we had only dry bread and smoked salmon for dinner, while grouse, which we dare not shoot, sat stolidly staring at us every few yards. But things soon mended, and on the top of the ridge we came upon a very paradise for game.

Underfoot the moss was firm, and here and there was a little rough grass; bilberry-bushes, dwarfed and scanty, were the only scrub, and the noble pines stood fairly wide apart. Everywhere were game-tracks, and right across the track lay a broad high-road worn in the moss by generations of elk.

There was no doubt now that we had struck the direct road from Salmon river to the prairies of the interior. Though it was early in October, the natives swore the elk had not begun to whistle yet; but as these Indians of Vancouver are but indifferent sportsmen, I should think they were wrong—the reason that we never heard any whistling being rather that the season was over than that it had not yet commenced.

Evening closed in on us that night in an awkward place high up above the stream, with an horizon before us still composed of the wooded hills through which the river wound; but when we started again next morning we thought a clearer light shone through the trees at the end of the next long gully, as if when we had found our way through them we should come out into the promised land of plains in which the wapiti live secure. But the end of the valley came and others followed, and still the woods grew no thinner, and no fresh point of vantage afforded us a view of a new class of country.

The Indians were growing terribly sick of our long tramp and the absence of game, and though I persisted in going forward they unfortunately succeeded in persuading me to leave the trail, and, by following the river-bed, pick it up again, half a mile farther on. Thus we saved a long roundabout journey through the brush, and though we had to wade most of the way by the river, these amphibious redskins rather enjoyed it. In my own mind I knew I was doing wrong, as the tracks seemed hardly an hour old, but constant disappointment had shaken my faith. Of course I was punished. When we regained the trail, even the Indians looked blank. Not only had our elk not gone out, but another had come in. There seemed to be no breath of wind either way, so we unwisely followed the new beast back along the trail, and in about half an hour came on what might have been the luckiest spot to me of all the lands I have shot over.

In amongst the cedars was a clearing of nature’s contriving, some half an acre square, and here the monarchs of Vancouver’s Island had met. Right and left, torn turf and broken boughs showed where the battle had raged; and at the point where the rivals had shocked together times and again, the ground was furrowed as if the ploughers had ploughed it. But it was only a battlefield that I looked on. The combatants had gone. One, the bigger beast, had couched not very far from the field which, I presume, he had won; but, getting our wind, had gone back towards our camp. The other had gone away by a side-trail towards Victoria Peak—that is, towards the interior of the island. I would fain have followed the biggest tracks, but as the wind was against us, and the wapiti had already heard or winded us, I gave up the idea; and now, disgusted with those who had hitherto advised me wrong, I handed part of my pack to the Indians, told them to keep back some way behind me, and took up the running on my own responsibility.

To cut a long story short, the beast seemed always close to us, sometimes leaving a track still wet on the river sand, at others a lair still warm in the fern. The wooded hills went on, and no open lands occurred, nor any easy of clearing or fit for farming. Once or twice we came to what Louis called a prairie, but it was nothing but a morass covered with marsh plants with gigantic leaves, and full of deep holes and treacherous bogs. The largest of these morasses was not more than a few acres in extent, and, oddly enough, though bears should have been there amongst the berries, not a head of game save grouse did we see day after day. In summer, when the salmon are thick in the rivers, and the banks are whitened with dead and dying 'humpies,' bears swarm, I believe. But they are only black bears, and I did not greatly deplore their absence.

On the second day of this new chase, about noon, we came to a place where, in a bed of black sand, many streams met, and our stream's identity seemed lost. Here the sand was pawed up so freshly, that the water was only just beginning to ooze into the hollows. In front lay in the river-bed a grove of cotton-wood, and the bush I think British Columbians call 'sal lal.' Here, then, my beast was lying, and I was inwardly wondering how I could best surround the patch with three men and make sure of getting my shot, when a low whistle made me lift my eyes from the track to fix them on the fairest sight I ever saw. You know Landseer's great picture, reader, in which the royal hart has just risen from his mountain lair, and, with his royal head thrown back, is snuffing in health and life on the fresh breeze of morning. In just such a posture, almost broadside on, and looking steadily at me from the overhanging river-bank beyond the cotton-wood grove, stood what I verily believe should be called the king of beasts, if gallant mien and grand proportion entitle any beast to the name. One long look I allowed myself, but I am afraid that it was along my rifle-barrel; for if I had seen that royal head only to lose it, I should never have slept in peace again. Thanks be to St. Hubert, no buck-fever shook my hand and no nervous mist dimmed my eye; but when the shot was fired, only a spasmodic shiver showed that my mark was not the mere statue of a stag. The Indians thought I had missed, of course, and I felt rather than saw that Charlie was going to shoot; but I managed to keep steady and plant another ball on the elk's shoulder. This time the shock was sharper, and, not being in a vital place, had no paralyzing effect; so, after a preliminary stagger, the elk turned and crashed through the timber.

I am not a good runner as a rule, but I should enter, I think, for a few races if I could always go as fast as I went across that river-bed—more shame to me; for I ought to have known, after that convulsive shiver, that I had no need to hurry or fear for the result. But, thank goodness, I have not grown out of all my boy's tricks yet, and the yell those Indians set up would have fired calmer blood than mine. An elk looks better at rest than in motion, but I could not watch the long, heavy stride far, for in two hundred yards my beast was down, and I felt the full joy of triumph. Like an idiot, I took his foreleg in my hands to try to turn him on to his back, that we might cut his throat with greater ease. But unluckily he was far from dead yet, and the way in which he laid me out on my back among those sal lal bushes a yard or two off from where he fell, will be the subject for many a laugh among Louis's friends in the future. Lucky for me that I pressed the great hoof tight against my chest as he drew me to him; for if he had only got hitting-room, what was only an unpleasant push would have been a kick to let daylight in. As it was, I was only well shaken and laughed at, and my ardour a little cooled.

When we had given the elk his *coup de grace*, I took out my tape and measured him as well as I could as he lay on his side, and, making all allowances, I should say he stood a clear sixteen hands and a little to spare at the shoulder when alive. His antlers were dyed with the sap of some tree against which he had been rubbing them—the rich red of the juniper bark—and were even, unbroken save in a slight degree in two places from his recent fight, numbered seventeen points all told, and girthed all but seven inches above the brow antler.

For the rest of that day skinning and packing kept us busy, and when I saw the huge mass of magnificent meat which we must needs leave to the wolves, my heart (not much given, I fear, to sentiment) smote me for the deed I had done, and I resolved to slay no more, but rest content with this one noble specimen of *Cervus Canadensis*.

That was a cold night we spent after the elk's death, though we carried our packs some distance on the back track to the most sheltered nook we could find; and it was still night when we got into harness again and began the march home, not in such exuberant spirits, perhaps, as we ought to have been. An elk is a grand beast to slay, and no finer trophy can grace a sportsman's hall than the head of such a beast as I had slain; but, brother sportsman, if you had to carry that head over your own shoulders all day through the thickest covert you ever saw, with pitfalls and fallen timber all round you, and ill-natured boughs that insisted on clinging to the branching antlers until they dragged you off your legs, do you think you would like it?

Poor Charlie had the head to carry, and though lazy as a negro, he is a very Samson when the work cannot be shirked. Neither Louis nor I could have done the day's work he did, and I shall never forget his look of perfect resignation when I found him tumbled off a log into a yawning gulf beneath, impaled amongst the antlers and timber in such a way that it took two of us five minutes to get him out. I felt that my own 70 lb. of pack was a good deal more than I cared about long ere the evening.

It was a quaint procession, the branching antlers on Charlie's shoulder going in front, over logs and bridges of fallen pines, diving now and again out of sight amongst the rank undergrowth, and reappearing knee-deep in the stream beyond. The forest silence in Vancouver's Island is absolutely unbroken by day, and that, together with the difficulty of seeing ahead and the choking density of undergrowth that seems to forbid all movement into or out of it, has a very depressing effect on the spirits. Up in our open tract of forest things were a little brighter; there was more room for the sun to shine, and it had just caught the white leaves of a cotton-wood below the cliff, and brought them out in bold contrast to the tresses of the hemlock and red-pine around. Amongst the red and green of the cedars a family of tits had assembled from goodness knows where, and were twittering noisily, as if they were in the very centre of the bird-world and had lots to talk about; a squirrel was chattering somewhere amongst the pines, and an old raven croaked enviously as he smelt our loads of venison.

The song of the waters sounded clear and musical up there in the open forest; the sunlight glanced back from rock and tree; a blue bit of heaven peeped through the trees, and our spirits rose in spite of our weariness. But as soon as we passed out of this upland region, our feet sinking silently among soft pine-needles and rotten wood, into the forest below, life and light seemed left behind us, bivouacking with the sun on the hillside. Silence reigned supreme in the river-bottom, except for our anathemas, as we broke our shins over hidden logs, or involuntarily sat down on a plant between a cactus and a thistle, with which these woods abound. If a bough broke, all nature seemed listening in outraged surprise.

A dozen times I thought Charlie would have thrown away my beautiful elk's head;

but by frequent rests and incessant supplies of tobacco I just managed to keep him going, until, after spending three hours within a mile of our camp, we sank down dead-beat alongside our canoe.

That night we feasted and made merry over a supper of trout and elk brains, fried with our last onion, and washed down with good brandy-and-water; and next morning saw us going gaily with the stream to the mouth of Salmon river, picking up a duck or two with Charlie's Winchester, and a good basket of trout with my rod, *en route*.

VII.

'THE HOME OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN GOAT.'

Opposite Salmon River lies Hardwicke Island; and if, reader, you will look at your map, you will see that the whole of the Strait hereabouts is full of islands and islets varying in size, but of a uniformly wooded and rugged character.

Passing through these to the mainland, you come upon a coast deeply indented, on which mountains rise almost in a sheer line from the sea to an elevation of from 1,500 to 6,000 feet above the sea-level. So large are many of the inlets and such is the maze of islands, that it takes a good chart and a skilful navigator to find the way in these waters; but we had a good chart, and Charlie knew the islands all as well as an angler knows each nook in his favourite stream. Sealing was Charlie's trade, and in the calm waters at the back of some rock which caught the sun, our canoe seemed to move of its own free will, so noiseless and effortless was Charlie's method of paddling. Once or twice a sullen plunge would send a frown to the paddler's face, and in a couple of minutes' time a round glistening head would appear above the waters some 200 yards away, and silently stare at us with big solemn eyes that, combined with the noiselessness of the apparition, gave a supernatural flavour to the whole adventure. Sometimes the mark seemed too small and too far away, and then, just paddling enough to keep our little craft moving, one of us would whistle softly. As often as not the seal became interested, and rose again and again nearer and nearer to the boat, lifting at last his great broad chest well out of the water as if to get a better view of his serenaders. Then the rifle rang out from the stern of the canoe; silence gave place to hurry and noise; the paddles went as fast as hands could use them—even the woman taking one for the moment.

Clever as a cat, Charlie picks his way over us, hardly altering the balance of the canoe as he goes, and never stopping our rowing for a moment. Easy all now! and the canoe glides up to the dark stain in the water, where, in a kind of crimson halo, the unfortunate seal is gradually sinking out of our reach. Once, twice, Charlie strikes with the long, light harpoon; and the second time the barbs go well home, and are left imbedded in our victim.

After this we have only to tow him into a cove, if one is handy, or bring him on board; but the result is not always as satisfactory as this. Often when the canoe reaches the place where the seal was, nothing but a reddening of the waters remains to show that he was hit, though you may be pretty sure that he is lying dead far below amongst the sea-wrack. Oftener still, the glistening head is an inch or two too low for the bullet, and the marksman has the pleasure of seeing his bullet skip idly away over the still waters. But if you miss one seal you have plenty more to shoot at, and it is capital rifle practice and no useless waste of life; for the last five seals that Charlie took back to Campbell river, fetched, I think he said, 4 to 5 dols. apiece.

But though seal-shooting or salmon-fishing beguiled our way, it was not for either seal or salmon that we sought these solitudes. Here and there on the sides of the mountain islands, a patch of a dozen acres, or less, would be free from timber, the reason being, one almost thought, that the space of rock laid bare was too precipitous for even a pine to get a footing on. Here the white goat or mountain antelope is to be seen in the early morning, and again when the sun has lost some of his noonday power. In and out among the islands we paddled for the greater part of the day until we reached a promontory on the mainland, on which, my guide said, his father had recently killed a couple of the beasts we were in search of.

If I do not call the promontory by name or define it too clearly, pardon me, brother sportsman, because I will confess to you that the mountain goat is nowhere quite as common as children in poor men's houses; and though I should not mind directing any really good man to the hunting-grounds which I have discovered, I do not want, when I call at my old camping-ground next year, to find that Tom, Dick and Harry have been before me and frightened all the game out of the country.

Far up in a deep indentation on the main coast we landed, and sent the squaw to look out for water—the only business, by the way, which she seemed to understand; and then we pitched our camp on the only available site, a kind of terraced rubbish-heap of clam-shells, echidna husks, and other refuse, amongst the roots of a big cedar. So dense was the growth of trees by the water's edge that, nasty though the clam-shell heap appeared, we could find no better place; and in truth, it was the old camping-ground for ages of the fishing Indians of this district, and we owed our floor of refuse several feet thick to their filthy habit of leaving all odds and ends on the floor, rather than take the trouble of throwing them outside. Having removed a cartload or so of clam-shells, we beat down the rest into a solid floor, and camped. Alas! we little knew how much our comfort for the next week would depend on that night's work.

In the early morning we paddled out from the shore, and there, high up on the bare place among the trees, were two white specks which, seen through my field-glass, proved to be a couple of goats at breakfast. At the distance from which we saw them they looked pure white, and far more solid and heavy in build than the ordinary goat; in fact, then and since, they always suggested to my mind the idea not so much of a big goat as a miniature yâk, or beast of some closely allied race. Carefully noting the position of the goats, and trying to guess from the little mist-drifts how the wind would be in the upper stories of our mountain, we paddled back to camp, cooked a salmon-steak, and in twenty minutes were toiling up through the mountain forest. Until you get on to the actual rock on which the goats feed, there is no need of anything but a good wind and stout limbs for this kind of sport; but I fancy there are places, where the rocks are bare and steep, that would try a good mountaineer: and after all, it matters little whether the fall be 100 feet or 1000, if only the point at which the faller alight be sufficiently hard.

There is a bush which grows on all these mountains, a low thick shrub with oval glistening leaves and dry brittle branches. In an English shrubbery it might excite your admiration, but if you found that your only way to hard-earned game lay through a jungle of this noisy plant, you would pray never to see it again. The Indian made so much noise in traversing these jungles that my own care in treading them was thrown away. But at last we gained a point at which a small moraine ran down the mountain-side, and along the edge of this we crept quietly enough.

Looking down through the timber below, another eye caught mine, and my finger instinctively curled round the trigger. Broadside on, with his head turned to me (*passant regardant*, I think heralds call the position), was the first Columbian deer I had seen; not one of the poor little black-tailed variety with small four or six point heads, but a big fellow with twelve points as regularly set above his forehead as nature could contrive them. He was a superb beast, and nothing could have saved him from my rifle, as he stood for three minutes not forty yards away; but my desire to bag the goats prevailed, and with a sigh I let the tall beast go, feeling that unless the goats gave me a shot when I rounded the next bluff, fortune would be more cruel than such self-denial merited. And of course—the goats were not there. Either the sun had got too high, or the stag had gone round and reported danger near, or the wily brutes had got our wind; in any case, they had departed, and a long day spent on the hill-tops, only resulted in the discovery of half a dozen of their lairs in the thick of the rattling shrub to which I have already alluded.

Both deer and goats seem to couch in these thickets, so that it is a hard matter to get near either, unless they are up and about on their feeding-grounds.

On our way down, a grouse or two came and looked at us from the end of some fallen log, and as we were then far away from the peaks we risked a shot or two; and with a grouse and a handful of the long white hairs of the goat, we had to go back contented to camp. Alas! that night the mists swept up into every corner of our mountain fastness, and in the morning every peak was densely veiled, while torrents of rain made little cataracts where, before, was dry mountain-side. No man could find his way in such mists, so we had to bide at home, or, at the best, troll for salmon.

For three weary days this went on, and day after day we spent shivering under our now sodden canvas, or busy on some engineering operation intended to divert the pool which had formed on the floor of our tent to the lower terrace where Charlie and Louis slept. The squaw had imported an umbrella into these wild regions, and though I laughed at her for bringing it at first, we were glad enough to have it during those days of constant rain, using it as an out-of-door shelter under which to change from dripping clothes to damp ones. I have had my share of wet camps, but I always count the days I spent in them as among the heaviest items in the bill of costs for sport enjoyed.

The only happy things seemed the wildfowl, and, safe in their waterproof suits, they had a merry time of it in our bay; nor did we disturb them, for their antics afforded us our only entertainment, and there was no lack of food in camp.

On the third day, towards evening, a little rift occurred in the clouds, and we were able to see the other side of our bay, some two hundred yards off; so we manned the canoe and went in search of a certain Red river of which Charlie knew, wherein were vast numbers of salmon easy to spear, thanks to the small size of the pools and the difficulty experienced by fish in getting over the shallows from one pool to another. Partly, perhaps, it was the mist rolling back on to the shore and hanging in long plumes about the pines, partly, too, the evening stillness and density of the woods with which the glen was draped, wherefrom a whole colony of crows flew up as we entered, that made such an impression on our minds.

In broad daylight on a bright day, the Red river might have looked even cheerful; but as we saw it, even Louis shuddered, and spoke of it as a place full of horrors and uncanny. The waters were a deep rust-red, as were all the banks and stones of the stream; and after the first great pool only a tiny rill, that you might jump across or wade half-leg deep in, joined one pool to the next. Leaving our canoe we landed at once, and thick though the trees stood, never was a fairer way made for sportsmen than that we found ready to our feet. Through and through the forest, like the meshes of a spider's web, ran the network of Bruin's highway, while along the mossy bank his roads were beaten hard and flat as the trottoir of civilization. At every step you took, a well-cleaned salmon's backbone, or a head rejected as uneatable, told why Bruin had so infested this quiet glen.

In 100 yards I counted the remains of as many or more fish, and from the tracks I should judge that bears of both sorts (black and grizzly) had been bivouacking by the Red river during the salmon-run. I don't think Louis cared much for the neighbourhood when Charlie solemnly assured him that grizzlies were more common than black bears; and as for Charlie himself, he simply stuck as near the canoe as possible, and refused entirely to share my vigil with me.

However, we found only two or three salmon left in the pools; the run was over, and the fish had gone back to the sea, and Bruin to some other harvest of fish on another stream, or berries far back in the mountains.

Some other year, I hope, when my canoe steals up in the shadows of that dark river-mouth, I shall have the pleasure of finding 'Mishka' (as we call him lovingly in Russia) busy at the fishing. Red river glen would form a splendid scene for the death of the biggest grizzly on record; and, indeed, a friend of mine, who thinks the aid of fancy should be invoked, however sparingly, in works of travel, tried hard to persuade me to paint a bear picture for this admirable frame.

I have never seen it discussed in the *Field*, but unless Solomon was speaking well within the mark when he said 'All men are liars' (at least in America), there must be some brutes weighing from 1,800 to 2,000 lb. to be met with from time to time in Colorado and Southern California.

A friend of mine, an Englishman, whose fancy is by no means given to wild flights, told me of one bear's track on which he and his Indian stumbled, into the single footprints of which he could put both his fair-sized feet, shod in big English shooting-boots, and still have an ample margin all round. If any man, whose experience of these things is greater than that of the majority of English sportsmen, should have any reliable statistics as to large bears and their weights, I dare say the *Field* would give him a hearing; and I know of a large number of men who would be exceedingly glad of any light thrown on the 'big b'ar stories' of the West.

But to return to the goats. Rain and mist for three days had wearied us all of what I shall call 'Clam-shell Camp,' so that on the morning of the fourth day we paddled away to an island hard by the mainland, on which, the summer before, a camp of hand-loggers had built a hut. Here we found shelter from the rain, a hearth on which we could keep a fire burning, and rough bunks in which to sleep secure from all chance of rheumatic fever. Round the hut, imparting an unsavoury smell to the neighbourhood, were the relics of four carcases of the Vancouver deer; and opposite to our door we often got glimpses of seals, or, in a partial clearing of the skies, of a couple of goats on the coast-range of the other side.

At length a fine day gladdened us; and as the goats could be clearly seen with my glasses, we rowed over to the mainland and tried a stalk. This time we had better luck, though a stiffer climb, which brought us to within about four or five hundred yards of our game. In a kind of bay of the mountain, timbered only on one side, we found ourselves amongst the last of the trees, looking across to where on the naked grey rocks a she-goat and a big kid were resting. Do what we would, we could get no nearer. All beyond us was bare as the palm of a man's hand, and in full view of the goats. All we could do was to wait for them to come nearer to us, or risk a shot at such a long range. The kid lay on a little shelf some forty yards above its dam, who, when we first saw her, was lazily cropping the wiry mountain grass.

By-and-by the sun struck full on the rock, and then both lay down, the quaint old nanny rolling from time to time on her back in the sunshine, for all the world like a cat on a hearth-rug. After watching for half an hour the kid grew restless, and both mother and child began to trot away over the rocks to the other side of the peak.

This would never do, so I took my chance and fired, the first shot hitting the old beast about right, as I thought, though too low down. For a while the broken ground hid her, and when I got a second chance she was farther off than ever, and though going lame, got over the ground at a very fair pace; so much so that my Indian did not think it worth while to follow her, and I gave up the chase, rather sick at the result, but not much surprised, as at 500 yards an Express is not the right tool to use.

On reaching camp, Louis, who had watched the whole proceeding, expressed his surprise in no measured terms, as he vowed that, having cleared the brow, the old goat lay down, and not all the coaxings of the young one could get her to move again. But the evening was now upon us, and though he positively asserted that the last time he looked through the field-glass the goat was still there, a fog reaching almost to the edge of the sea hid everything from us, and made a second ascent in search of our dead impossible.

For all I know, that fog is hanging round the peak still; for though we waited two days, contenting ourselves with stalking small deer on our island and salmon-fishing, we never got a glimpse of that particular mountain again. For bachelor sportsmen a week more or less makes small difference; but I knew I was already overdue at Victoria, so I left the log-hut and took the canoe down to N., an Indian ranche which stands at the foot of one of the best goat-hills of Bute Inlet.

On our way thither we came across an enormous whale, which rose several times so close to us that it became apparent that any nearer acquaintance would be disastrous to our little craft; so we had to send him a leaden message to quit, which he did with such a furious flourish of his tail that the ghastly pictures of whale-boats whirling bottom upwards through space, which one occasionally meets with seemed no longer overdrawn to me. Two or three other whales were spouting in the strait, and before evening we met a small fleet of tall narrow black sails coming up towards us, and going in the direction taken by the whales. Now disappearing, now reappearing closer to us, we made these out to be four of the whale's worst enemies, fish of the 'thresher' persuasion, and no doubt the poor old whale who got stung by our bullet had an evil time of it later on when the threshers met him.

The Indians declare that the thresher is a most mortal enemy of the seal's. Be that as it may, all the places where seals should have been were empty that evening. All the way up the little creek that leads to the Indian settlement of N., we saw enormous quantities of mallard duck. On either side a low swampy fringe of land, intersected with natural dykes, lies between the woods and the water. In these favourite feeding-haunts thousands of mallards were congregated, rising flight after flight as we passed along. Here, too, I saw several times boxes of wood fixed high up in the trees; and on asking my men what they were, I found that it was the fashion here to bury the dead thus above ground instead of below it. One such box looked peculiarly ghastly, part of the woodwork having given way beneath years of rain and rot, so that some of its contents were visible. There was not much to see, but fancy filled in the picture only too readily.

As the Indians were at their ranche and appeared friendly, I made up my mind to endure the dirt for one night, and study the red man at home. The ranche in this instance was subdivided by tumble-down partitions, ragged old blankets, or a dozen planks propped against the floor and a rafter. Privacy was not apparently the object of these partitions, but merely a desire to assign to each family its own domain. Rags and filth abounded round each fire, but food and warmth are all these creatures ask, and of that there seemed no stint. At the far end of the ranche a goodly crop of nettles had crept in and grown, and here I built my fire, hoping that my friends the nettles had somewhat purged the ground from its impurities, or when trodden down would at least hide them from sight.

I suppose man, even if he is only a fishing Indian of British Columbia, is a nobler creature than the beast of the field; but surely no unprejudiced judge, neither man nor beast, looking at the cleanliness of the cat and the filthiness of a Chinook, at the clean feeding of a horse and his generous instincts, and the garbage eaten by an Indian and the meanness of his ideas, would assign to the beast the lower place in the order of creation. My St. Bernard, Hubert, dirty feeder as he is, never had so foul a muzzle as the cleanest of these ignoble savages.

When we arrived only a few rickety canoes lay at the landing-place, and a few old hags and naked, or nearly naked, old men shivered about the doorways; but towards evening several canoes came slowly in from a distant mud-flat, where the squaws had been digging for clams. Pailful after pailful of these big cockles (for such they appear to the eye of the casual observer) was emptied on the floor, and on these and dried salmon the natives feasted Louis and Charlie.

The Columbian Indians are like the celebrated old Irishwoman who ate whenever she was hungry and drank whenever she was dry. They seem to have no regular hours for meals, or any intention of making a meal and getting it over at one sitting. No; their fashion is to plant a pile of clams by their fireside, and hang festoons of salmon in the smoke from their own hearth; and as they make mats or mend their lines, or doze away the idle hours, they help themselves now to a couple of clams, now to a strip of salmon, and throw their leavings to the crowd of dirty brats that sit and watch like dogs while their fathers and mothers feed.

As everyone else was eating clams, I thought it best to try them for the sake of a new experience, if nothing else. The method is simple. Selecting a couple, you break one against the other as you would walnuts, and when the shell is broken, a long yellow stalk about as thick as your little finger offers you the first bite. It looked innocent enough and clean, so I took heart and made a bite at it.

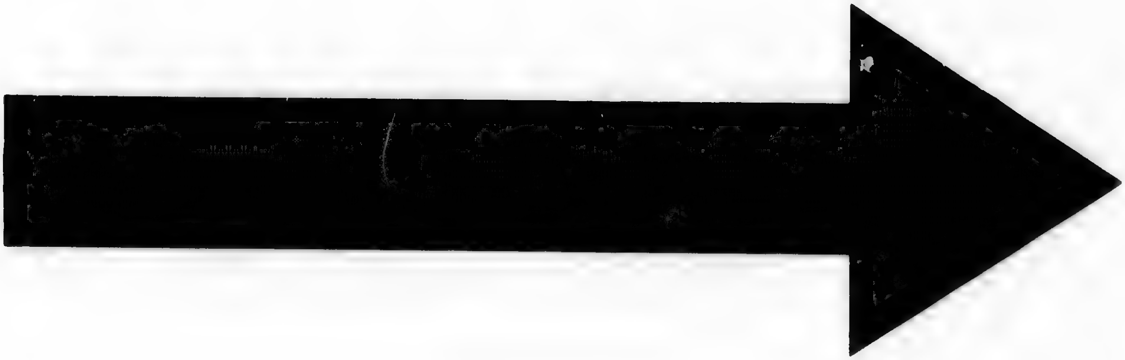
Even for experience' sake, reader, do not you be so rash. The yellow thing, tough and strong, was far from dead, and gave such a horrid writhe as my teeth touched it that it almost jumped out of my mouth. I dare say I looked white and sick, and certainly my hosts seemed to enjoy the joke amazingly; but nothing shall ever induce me to try live clams again. The Indians seem to think the more the clam kicks the better he tastes. Strung up beside the salmon are rows of things which look like dry mushrooms. These are smoked clams for winter use, and make, I believe, excellent soup—'skookum tumtum muckamuck,' as my hosts called it in their queer jumble of different languages, which is called Chinook, was taught to these men by the Hudson Bay Company's Indians, and is now in common use among all the coast tribes. I did not much wonder at a 'King-George's-man' (Chinook for 'white man') calling any Indian food 'muckamuck.' It sounded right in my ears, at any rate.

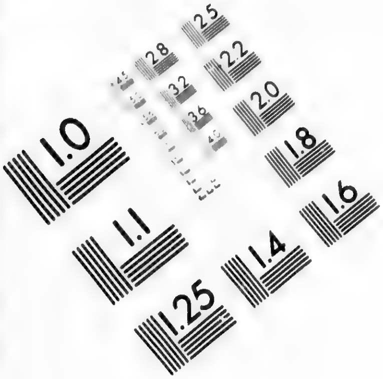
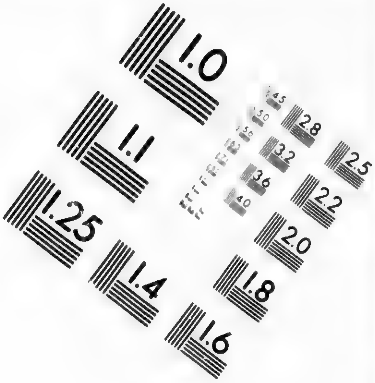
Most of the Chinook words are slightly mispronounced English or French words, but I fancy that the original groundwork of the language is an Indian dialect. Most of the names which the Chinook Indians use for things have, however, a very full share of descriptive power in them; as, for instance, 'fever,' which they call 'cole sick, waum sick,' and a seal, which is 'siwash cosho,' the man-pig. The names of birds seem borrowed from the notes of the birds themselves, at all events such as I heard used amongst the men I met. For instance, a mallard they called 'kweh-kweh;' and, on referring to a Chinook dictionary, I find that this and the names of geese and swans, at any rate, are the proper Chinook terms, and not mere sounds used to convey a meaning to my ears, untaught in Indian language.

Though the mist hung about heavily when morning broke after our first night at N., there was a loophole in the clouds through which we could see the goat-pastures of our mountain, and there, as usual, two white specks were moving slowly along the ledges. On these British Columbian hills there never seem to be more than a couple of goats to each district; and Charlie confirmed me in the impression which resulted from my own observations by saying that three was the greatest number he had ever seen together, and he had never seen two bands on one hill. They are quaint beasts to look at, with huge white beards and clumsy shaped bodies, though I never saw one with as marked a hump on the back as in the specimen photographed by Mr. Baillie-Grohman. The horns are not unlike a chamois'—more polished and smoother, perhaps, and a trifle longer, without the sharp, backward, hook-like curve which characterizes a chamois' horns. What adds greatly to the quaint aspect of a Rocky Mountain goat is that the legs have such long and thick coats, that at a little distance the beast appears to be wearing loose white pantaloons.

At N. we were even less lucky than elsewhere, being unable to find the spot on which we had marked the goats feeding, thanks to the density of my guides and the forest through which they misguided me. Worse still, we got into such a vile corner amongst the rocks, that, Charlie having dislodged a big boulder, we were only able to get down by leaping into the top of a pine-tree growing close up alongside the cliff face. As my Indians were no tree-climbers, their descent was highly amusing to anyone who had already gained *terra firma*. A wolf-hunt on the mud-flats opposite the ranche ended my day's sport in N.; and when I got back to the camp I had the pleasure of hearing that no one but a certain bearded rascal among our hosts could find his way to the goat-pastures, and he would not go because Charlie had told him that he, Charlie, was alone to get any reward in case of a successful stalk.

That night a breeze sprang up, which



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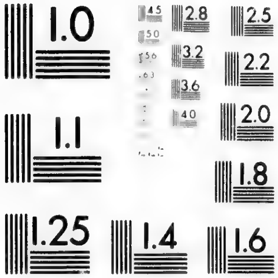
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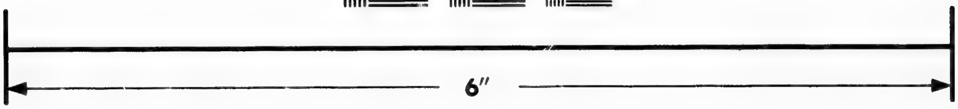

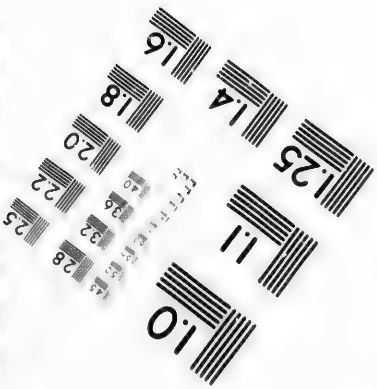
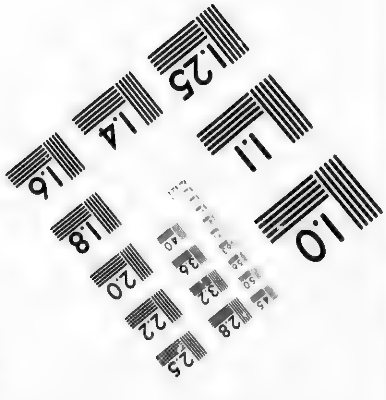

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offered to save us many a weary hour of paddling if we availed ourselves of it; so that, after a hasty meal, we got into our canoe and paddled away for the strait. Once round the headland, our boat skimmed like a live thing before the breeze, and soon the dark woods and rippling water under our keel were forgotten, or only remembered in a dream.

When I woke again, things had taken a different aspect upon them. The waters, that had hitherto looked as calm as if no wind could wake them, were breaking into our canoe. The woman had been ordered to lie down in the bottom of the craft and keep still, or run the risk of being thrown overboard. Charlie was scared and fidgety, and Louis, though thoroughly plucky and reliable, was a little nervous at having his wife on board, and evidently thought it was high time for me to wake up. I suppose, where we were, the channel was nearly three miles across, and we were about midway between the mainland and Thurlow's Island. Our sail was a simple square sheet, rigged up on a little mast in the bow of our canoe. Twice the mast broke, and the sail lay flapping overboard, and it seemed impossible to avoid a wreck. But Louis is a capital man in a canoe, and though all but swamped a dozen times, he managed at last to run us up against a single rock, he and I jumping into the water and towing our craft through the waves at the last, until we beached her high and dry to wait for morning. Luck had ordained that some driftwood should have been left upon our rock; so, spite of wind and rain, we had a fire, and cooked a wild-duck and some dampers at 2 a.m., while the wind came tearing down through the narrows, driving mist and rain before, and making us thankful that we got to shore when we did.

When the light came the wind fell, although enough remained to save us the labour of paddling. About lunch-time we caught the 'narrows' at their quietest moment, and got safely through, making Campbell river early in the day. Here we landed Charlie and paid him, an operation which gave me some idea of the comparative opulence of these fishing Indians. I wanted change for a hundred-dollar note, if possible, and though I never expected to get it at the Campbell river settlement, I asked Charlie to try to obtain it for me. To my astonishment, an old crone, his mother, at once produced a hatful of silver, enough to change several hundred-dollar notes. Much of the money, I fear, had come from the cash-box abstracted from the steamer burnt in these waters not many months ago, but much, too, was, I dare say, fairly earned. At least half the coins had no marks of fire upon them, though others indisputably had.

From Campbell river to Nanaimo, Louis and I had fair light breezes all the way, so that it mattered little that I had missed the Comox steamer. Day and night we glided along by the shores, catching salmon enough to feed us; stopping sometimes at a settler's shanty, and sleeping by turn in the bottom of our canoe. A fresh incident had been added to our daily lives since we went up into these waters first; for now every day we used to see schools of salmon—dog-salmon, Louis called them—not leaping now and again, as the ordinary salmon do, but crossing the straits in a series of leaps, travelling almost as much above water as under it. I shall not soon forget that last night on the straits by one of the many maple-bays.

Now that my hunting trip was over, fog and mist and rain had left the skies as pure as crystal, and as bright. Day was dying out, and we were weary with a pleasant weariness that only comes after honest toil. The sun had gone down, and streaks of pink cloud with faint blue edges, and long bands of light which were neither sea-green nor gamboge, but something of each and yet not altogether either, lay across the horizon, and the whole sky seemed full of a soft light, soft as moonlight, but less cold. As the light went, deep glistening purple shadows spread over the water, deepening as they neared the shores until the whole sea was in various shades of brighter or darker purple. On these bright dark waters the kitty-hoo-its (as Indians call the gulls) rocked their jauntily-cocked sterns, making them look like little caravels. Now and again a leaping salmon splashed the purple water into silvery drops, and then bit by bit the light faded, and dark woods and clear-cut islands stood out as if photographed against the clear night sky.

VIII.

ON BOISFORT PRAIRIE.

On my way back from Nanaimo to Victoria, fortune threw in my way an opportunity which I had long been seeking. A Mr. C., an old Eton boy, was one of my fellow-passengers on the s.s. *Hunt*, and our acquaintance, formed on board, ripening into friendship at Victoria, resulted in my accepting his invitation to visit him at his farm in Lewis County, where I had a chance, not only of seeing what manner of life an English gentleman may make for himself on a Western farm, but also of judging for myself of the chances of a valley (the Chehailis Valley) of which I had heard continually on my way through from Portland to Vancouver.

The railway from Tacoma to Chehailis, or at least to Tenino, runs through a district in which level park-like lands and occasional treeless spaces afforded a pleasant contrast to the everlasting wooded hills of Vancouver's Island. It was an absolute relief to the eye to look upon a place where there was no timber. But though the land is level and fair to look upon, and the homesteads which dot it substantial and trim, the soil is so poor and stony that it is reported to carry barely one sheep to four acres, and to sell 'improved' at only 4 dols. per acre; while land at Chehailis now sells at from 15 to 25 dols. an acre improved; and railroad lands at from 4 to 5 dols.

At Chehailis, a station on the N. P. Railway, where we alighted, there is a rapidly-growing town, which boasts a flour-mill, at which the settlers can realize from 90 cents to 1 dol. per bushel for their wheat; some good stores; a capital forge; and (not the least advantage), as far as I saw, only one saloon or inn, at which we lunched. From Chehailis a corduroy road leads to Boisfort Prairie, on which my friend's farm lies, and thither we rattled away in a farm waggon as soon as lunch was over.

When men speak of 'rattling away,' they generally mean you to understand that the pace at which they proceeded was considerable. In this instance I mean to imply no such thing, and anyone who has tried a corduroy road about November, in a farm waggon, will understand that it is possible to travel very slowly and yet 'rattle away' to your heart's content. If the settlers of Chehailis Valley paid some road-rate and employed hired labour to make and mend their road, I fancy they would have a better one than that which they now keep up by contributions of their own time and personal labour.

Round Chehailis itself the homsteads are strikingly well built, and the farms almost English in their neatness and order; and they deserve to be well looked to if local report be accurate, that some of them yield an average of forty bushels to the acre without manure. The country between Chehailis and Boisfort is a succession of low wooded hills through which, some seventy years ago, a fire swept, thinning and charring the forest and driving out the Indians and the game. The game has come back, and is now more plentiful than ever, as witness the bag made by two lads during a single day of my stay at Boisfort. The boys were both under fourteen, and never went half a dozen miles from their ranche ; but, thanks to their three hounds and their rifles, they bagged three deer in one day.

Since I left the country I believe a Bill has been passed at Olympia for the prevention of hunting with dogs in Washington Territory. This will no doubt be a useful measure for the preservation of deer ; but the cougars and other predatory beasts will increase as the use of dogs diminishes, round the settlements. But though the game came back after the big fire, and the pasture in the charred forest was improved by it, the Valley of Chehailis knows the red man no more. I saw only one Indian during my stay in the country.

The road to Boisfort follows for most of the distance the general direction of the Chehailis, a stream in which trout abound, and salmon occur during the season in fair quantities. The settlers spear the salmon, and the trout afford good sport for the fly-fisher. Of course the ranches lie by the river-banks, and at Boisfort itself the river winds to and fro through the whole prairie. The settlers' houses are of timber, built not for show but use, and twenty-five per cent. of them probably built by the men who own and live in them.

C.'s house, when we reached it, was a fair specimen of the class, just large enough to hold its tenant and his family, and capable of growing as his needs grew. In England too often we build as if we expected the fortune required to keep up our mansions to follow the building; the result is, as some one said, the new wings fly away with old estates. In America men are content to build their fortunes, leaving their heirs to build the houses. But it seemed quaint, for all that, in this little log-cabin to find an English lady and her children, a young cadet of a good old Devonshire family learning farming, and the 'boss' of the whole place an old Eton boy. But however simple the externals might appear, inside the house everything was pure English. The lavish hospitality, the real comfort, the array of sporting implements, and the larder full of game, testified to the survival of national peculiarities in a foreign land. And a right good time we had at Boisfort.

Very early in the morning there is an unpleasant operation to be performed, called 'doing chaws,' in the simple language of the farm. This, luckily, applied only to Charlie and Mr. C., who, I believe, except during the busiest part of the year, work the 300-

acre farm without help. 'Doing chaws,' by the way, means feeding the creatures generally. After this we breakfasted, and then as November is not a busy time, one or other of my friends came with me to shoot or to visit our neighbours.

Grouse abound all over the district, and deer are very plentiful; but I found so little amusement in sitting shivering by a pile of driftwood in the river-bed waiting for hounds to drive down the deer, that I shall not bother the reader with a description of this exceedingly tame kind of sport. The only quaint part of it is to see the deer come down to the piles of driftwood and creep in among them like a rabbit into a faggot-stack, lying down in the water under the driftwood, so as to conceal himself from the eyes and elude the keen noses of his enemies.

A cougar-hunt we had was better fun, though not very successful. One of the settlers owned a celebrated cougar dog, as keen on his particular quarry as a terrier cn cats; and with him for an ally, Charlie and I departed on the hunt.

Our ground lay only three miles from the house, and in a very short time we were at work, running madly after the baying dog through dark burnt pine-woods, or more often, unfortunately, through the rank vegetation of the river-bottom. But that day we 'treed' no cougar, though Watson the dog-owner had fine sport on another occasion, 'treeing' his cougar and killing him with a shot-gun, after standing a couple of charges from the wounded beast. A more cowardly creature than the cougar does not exist, for when roused by a dog he never shows fight, nor even runs far, but after going a couple of hundred yards 'trees,' and waits for the hunter to come up and despatch him.

One of these beasts, measuring ten feet from tip of nose to tip of tail, was reported as killed near Newaukum (twelve miles from Chehailis) during my stay, and I saw the skins of three killed by the Watson boys, which must have measured well, though a good deal short of the above.

Sport is almost too good round Chehailis, distracting the attention of the young farmers too much from their farms; the result being that, finding no difficulty in getting a living, they prefer hunting to working, and in many cases make comparatively little of first-rate chances. Another thing that struck me out here was, that the men who owned farms were in a very large number of cases men with no pretension to experience, but rather men who, finding other businesses paid badly or required too close application, had taken to farming as amateurs, and, thanks to the richness of the land, were at least living on their farms.

I suppose it would be difficult to find a spot, even in America, where the unknown comes nearer to comparative civilization. C. has his own flour-mill on the farm, yet some of his neighbours thresh out their wheat as men did in the days of the patriarchs, by driving unshod horses over it. A station of the N. P. Railway is within twelve and a half miles of Boisfort; ten miles up in the hills from Boisfort the country has not been all explored; elk roam about there, and I saw in one settler's garden the cast antler of what was certainly a moose, which at no very distant date roamed about the hills five miles from C.'s cottage. The climate of Lewis County, or rather of this part of it, resembles that of Devonshire. The farmers are sure of a dry harvest-time, and indeed rely upon this to such an extent that they never stack their wheat, but bring it straight from the stooks in the field to the threshing-machine. Snow is of rare occurrence, and winter in Chehailis means a very wet mild season, lasting with but little variation for six weeks or more.

The second night of my stay in Chehailis we had a wedding celebrated according to local custom by a 'shivareen,' which is a performance of the following description: When the fond bridegroom and his blushing bride have supped and gone to roost, their friends and well-wishers, mostly males, arrive from the neighbouring ranches, bringing with them guns, rifles, drums, horse-fiddles, and other musical instruments. With these they commence a lively serenade, firing volleys and working the horse-fiddle—a big wooden box with a very active stick inside—until the unhappy pair turn out and drink the healths of their untimely visitors. Should the husband turn rusty, his callers may possibly pull his roof off, pour water down his chimneys, or forcibly extract him *in statu quo* from his nuptial couch.

Luckily it is not necessary for a settler at Chehailis to get married there, and I believe that these proceedings are limited to only a very select circle. They tell a quaint story of one of the early settlers in this valley which I have never seen in print before; perhaps I may be forgiven if I repeat it.

Two prospectors were travelling through the country looking out for minerals, and, being new-comers, were armed to the teeth. 'Don't stay at any of the tents you may pass on your way,' said their town friends; 'the men of Chehailis are a bad lot.' So they passed on, and kept away from the settlers.

At last hunger overcame the scruples of one of the twain, who, nearing a little log-hut in a remote patch of prairie land, confided to his chum that he preferred being shot to starving. So the two knocked, and were admitted to the cabin, wherein they found a mild-looking grey-bearded man who eyed them nervously; but on being asked for food, produced a frying-pan and began to cook a rasher of bacon for his guests. So far all seemed well, but from the moment of their entry the host had persistently kept his face towards the wanderers, putting his hand even behind his back to hold the pan over the fire. Noticing this, the boldest of the two prospectors, concluding that the man's mistrust arose from the sight of the revolvers which his guests carried, proceeded with some ostentation to divest himself of his belt and lay it, weapons and all, on the middle of the table. A slow sad smile crept over the settler's face, and with a gentle sigh he remarked, 'Ah no, no—it's not that; but for the last three years I've had no seat to my breeches.'

Clothes and many other conveniences of civilization were scarce in Chehailis in the old days. Even now some things occur which might startle a tender-foot. Fancy, for instance, your parson calling to buy oats, and having paid half-price for them, remarking, as he rode away, 'Guess, mister, you can take the rest out in preachments.'

Not the last thing to strike a stranger is that every lad in the settlement, from ten upwards, carries a rifle and hunts. The weapon most in fashion is an enormously heavy piece, weighing from fourteen to sixteen pounds. Anything lighter than this is 'of no account.'

After the first three days you go by your Christian name, and not a boy of twelve in the country but considers himself as much a man as you are. And, indeed, these young squatters are wonderfully manly fellows, ready and able to do a man's work at a child's years. I found one boy of ten making himself a model circular saw from a design of his own, by way of pastime, one day; the same little fellow asking me to stay and dine 'with him,' and showing me a dancing saloon which 'father and I run,' with the air of one contemplating a good business of his own creation.

But farming, after all, is the most important affair on these rich lands along the east branch of the Chehailis river; and as I have obtained reliable information on the subject, and many youngsters are continually looking for somewhere to settle, perhaps I should do well to dwell somewhat fully on this point, premising that my information is not of my own compiling (for I am not a practical farmer), but was supplied to me by a thoroughly reliable English gentleman, who has farmed in Australia and America for sixteen years.

Lewis County, in which Boisfort Prairie is situated, lies between Columbia River and Puget Sound, about an equal distance from either. It is a long, narrow strip of country about 100 miles long by 30 broad. For the most part, Lewis County is, like all the country round, a succession of rolling hills, covered everywhere with a heavy growth of large timber—fir and cedar. But now and again amongst these hill-lands occur valleys of wonderful fertility—such valleys, for instance, as those of Newaukum and Chehailis, Tilton, and the valley of the Skookum Chuck river.

The fact that throughout the entire district these easily cultivated spots are the exception, and not the rule, adds greatly to their importance and value, especially when we consider the great towns springing up within easy distance of them, such as Portland, Victoria, Seattle, Tacoma, Kalama, and minor towns like Toledo, Centreville, and Wenlock.

The soil in these valleys is a rich sandy loam, which yields enormous crops of grain and grass, fruit, or almost any other thing which agriculturists grow. Hops are said to do well in the Chehailis Valley, and it is only want of sufficient settlers and capital to attract and employ a regular supply of labour, which prevents the Chehailis farmers from seriously embarking on this enterprise.

The settlers already in the Boisfort Prairie—which, of course, is the sample of such lands from which I judge all the rest—are for the most part English or Welsh, or at least there are as many Britishers as Yankees. As a rule, these men have taken homesteads under the American Government system, have cleared a few acres at a time and built themselves huts to live in, until at the end of a few years they have a fair farm with a house on it. This the enterprising man sells, realizing a good deal on his venture, and proceeds to hew out another farm for himself or some other man from the surrounding forest. The men for this kind of work are the small farmers who live on the borders of Shropshire and Wales—hard-handed, honest fellows, who have made a better fight than most men through the last nine years of agricultural depression at home.

The Willoway Dairy-farm, some four or five miles from Chehailis Station, is worth a visit from anyone interested in pioneer-farming. 'My missus,' said the sturdy owner to me, 'always said that where there's a will there's a way, so we calls this the "Willoway" Farm.' That he has the will and has found a way to success, ten minutes spent on this settler's farm will prove. In a well-built house, built chiefly with his own hands, a neatness and comfort prevail that seem little in accord with preconceived ideas of backwoods-life. There is a good piano for the daughters, a rack of rifles for the sons. But the chamber piled to the ceiling with excellent cheeses, the dairy full of golden butter, and the new houses and barns a-building, show unmistakably that neither sons nor daughters spend an unfair share of time on mere amusements. The young men are not of sufficiently ripe years yet, but when they have learnt a little more on the father's farm, each son has a large slice of rich, uncleared bottom-land not far off in the valley, where he, in his turn, will go and build himself a home and a competence. It is not a little for a man to be proud of, that he has not only built his own house and earned his own living, but has been able to bring up his children, ensure them a youth full of outdoor life and manly toil and sport, ending his good deeds towards them by a gift of such a rich farm as only needs the exercise of the skill the father has taught them, and the strength he has transmitted to them, to ensure the same degree of prosperity to the sons which has been enjoyed by their sire.

But land in Washington Territory grows daily in value. The two new lines which will next year open upon this district (I mean the Northern Pacific Railway and the Canadian Pacific Railway) cannot fail to bring a flood of immigrants into the country. At present land may be bought at from 4 to 5 dols. an acre, and improved farms at from 15 to 20 dols. These lands produce wheat-crops varying from forty bushels an acre to (say) twenty.

Take examples. There is a farm close to Chehailis which has been yielding an average crop of forty bushels of wheat to the acre for the last fifteen years, and this without manure, rest, or any rotation of crops. This is some of the richest bottom-land in the county, has never been ploughed more than four inches deep, and the wheat grown on it is (if I can read correctly the entry made somewhat unsteadily in my note-book at the time) 'white Chili and white Cook wheat.'

Then, as an example of prairie-land, take Mr. C.'s farm at Boisfort, which has yielded for thirty years successive wheat-crops averaging twenty-five bushels to the acre.

The cost of production of an acre of wheat on these farms is (taking everything into account) about 8 dols. The wheat so produced can be sold at the farm on an average of years at about 80 to 85 cents per bushel. Labour, of course, is the most serious item on the expenditure side. Ploughmen require 1 dol. per diem, the farmer finding a pair of horses and the plough, and board and lodging for the man. A man should plough two acres a day with a 14-inch plough. Seed is sown broadcast, two bushels to the acre. Drills cost so much, on account of high rate of freight and protective tariffs, that Pacific coast-farmers do not use them. Twine-binders and threshing-machines come round in the season, these latter charging 5 cents a bushel for wheat and 3 cents for oats. I have before me now a complete account of the various farm operations in use among the Chehailis Valley farmers, and the cost of each; but probably I have already said more than enough on this topic to satisfy the ordinary reader. It only remains for me to add that, having bought a farm out here myself, my reader may put in what allowance of salt he likes with my rosy statements. I can only say that I have tried not to overrate the advantages of what appeared to me a farmer's Eden.

In addition to the wheat-crops of the valley, almost all the farms have a large quantity of hill-land unoccupied lying alongside of them, and here, thanks to the clearing effected by the great fire, there is plenty of pea-vine and rye-grass, affording excellent pasture for sheep. The only drawback would be the difficulty of protecting your flocks from beasts of prey. Were it not for this, these hills, with the river running so handily at their base, would make excellent sheep-runs.

This charred forest is a risky place to walk or ride through when rain has made the tops of the trees heavy, and the wind is blowing strongly amongst them. Many a life has been lost in this way; and I never enjoyed a ride less than I did one of about an hour's duration under such circumstances. Every other tree is a huge charred stump, burnt all but through somewhere near the middle of its hundred feet of height. Wherever your eye turns, gigantic logs seem poised only on the merest fragment of cinder, ready at any moment to yield to the persuasions of the wind.

All along your path are fallen logs, and your guide from time to time ejaculates, 'Ah, that's gone at last; I thought it couldn't hold up much longer.' Almost every five minutes, while the wind lasts, you hear one of these burnt giants come crashing down in the forest, sometimes close to you, sometimes far off, the thunder of his fall echoing through the woods like a salvo of artillery.

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IX.

'OLD VIRGINY.'

Out West it is easier to get an invitation to stay with a dozen friends than to obtain leave to quit one of them. They welcome the coming, but are reluctant to speed the parting guest. However, I got back to Chehailis Station eventually, and once more set my head for home. Before leaving Lewis County a strange thing befell me, which, with luck, might have been a very thrilling adventure. Being delayed one Sunday night at a small public-house, the only one in the town, I found myself in the society of a couple of burley pioneers, hankering like myself for a little whisky and water with their last pipe. Having obtained some of the 'cratur' from mine host, I proceeded to entertain my fellow-lodgers, who declared themselves to be a couple of farmers from the East, prospecting for land for themselves and others to take up next spring.

From one thing to another the conversation shifted, until at last it got to 'road agents,' the highwaymen of the West. One of my companions had recently been in a coach which had been stopped, and the only man who contrived to keep his dollars in safety was a fellow who had them under the sole of his foot inside the stocking. He (the narrator) thought this a good plan—didn't I? or did I know of any better way of eluding the wily 'agent'? But as I never talk about my money to strangers, I was not to be 'drawn,' though I never entertained the faintest doubt of the honesty of my questioner. Next day I had accomplished several hours, travelling by rail, and was on board the steamer for Portland, when I ran up against the youngest of my two guests of the night before.

'Hallo, sir!' I ejaculated; 'I thought you meant to stay at Chehailis for a week or two. If I had known you were going to Portland we might have gone together.'

To my astonishment the man pretended not to know me; seemed a good deal annoyed; swore he never was at Chehailis, and all this in a queer falsetto voice, which, apart from features and dress, would have been quite sufficient to convince me that I was not labouring under a mistake as to identity. Concluding that he knew his own business best, I took no more notice of my quondam friend, and lost sight of him, indeed, until I accidentally overheard him securing the next room to mine in my hotel at Portland.

The next day, looking out from my bath to attract the attention of a nigger in the barber's shop beyond, I caught a glimpse of something that induced me to hold my tongue, and do without my towels for a few minutes. Since I had been in my bath my friend from Chehailis had entered the saloon, and as I looked I saw the barber remove, not only most of his luxuriant locks, but the whole of his beard, whiskers, and even his moustache. When my friend rose, smooth-faced and an altered man, I privily took a mental photograph of him in his new aspect, and, having dressed, bought a few revolver cartridges, and (much more sensible precaution) exchanged my cash for an order, payable only to me, on a New York bank. These precautions I mentioned casually to my hotel servant and the innkeeper, from one of whom possibly the intelligence was conveyed to my follower, for he left the place next day.

It may be I wronged the man by my suspicions, but at least this much may be gained from my experiences, that it is unwise to confide in any stray acquaintance your own particular 'tip' for keeping your money secure.

As we swung round a curve on the N. P. Railway, the morning after leaving Portland, we came upon the first accident which, I believe, has happened on this line. A herd of cows had come up under the cliff for shelter or to feed, at about the time that a luggage train was passing that way. The result was before us in the cold grey light of five a.m. Three or four dead cows, some with their heads or limbs knocked clean off; some more only enough damaged to crawl away and die before they reached the broad waters of the Columbia, here running close against the line; a locomotive engine standing on its head, and half a dozen cars in every position but their normal one; a hundred yards or so of line being taken up and relaid before we could proceed on our journey, by a gang of Chinese in loose blue garments and enormous wicker-work hats—such was the incident that afforded us food for conversation on the return journey.

On the way out, a robbery committed in our Pullman car by a billiard-sharper from Wallula Junction broke the monotony of the travel. We collared that sharper though, and were able to restore the dollars to the unfortunate lady who had lost them.

During the last part of the journey, from St. Paul to Portland, the line of the N. P. Railway passes through a dreary sandy country as trying to the travellers as the sands on the U. P. Railway. Nothing can keep the alkaline sand out, so that for one day out of the six you feel 'it were better not to be.' They tell me that from Umatilla to the Dalles, efforts are being made to bind down the drifting sand by the cultivation of willows, sunflowers, or anything else that will grow on it. No use appears to be made of the sunflowers.

On the way back through Montana, I had the luck to travel with a whole crowd of American cattle-men and others coming into the towns for the winter from their frontier ranches. I never met a nicer set of fellows, full of good spirits and good stories, with kindly feelings for the old country, and a good word for the Britishers, 'who were cutting it pretty thick in Montany, and could hold on to a bucking cayouse as well as ever a cowboy among 'em.'

Most of these men, to my intense surprise, belonged to a class which I thought did not exist out of some few semi-civilized corners of England. They were downright Tories—thought most things would 'grow' better and stronger in the long-run for being let alone a bit. If a constitution was to grow up strong, it didn't want forcing with a lot of stump-spouter's rubbish; and so on and so on. As for America, one of my Yankee Tories—a big brown-bearded fellow, with a large herd of his own not far from the Rosebud river, and still under fifty years of age—seemed to doubt if things had much improved since the time when he remembered 'men and women sitting round the open hearth at night, men pounding the corn in hollow stumps, and women carding wool;' the time when no one had an organ in the house, and every woman could make her own dresses and was satisfied with three or four a year; when men still reverenced something, believed in national heroes, looked up to local senators as demigods, and to parsons as real friends and pastors. Now the senator is only a 'leather-head' who made his pile by such and such a swindle, and the parson is a 'gospel-shark' or 'devil-dodger.'

The only reverence for anything, except the dollar, still left in America, was for women, and, thank God, that flourished finely still, especially on the frontier; so that as long as that lasted, the cattle-rancher thought if they could only get rid of those 'durned monoplies' he'd mebbe leave pretty nigh as good a world to his boys as the one he'd lived in.

After reaching St. Paul, I turned aside and took a ticket for Washington in Virginia, my own specimen of the class of young gentleman-emigrant, of which most English families nowadays have at least one sample, being located in the county of Amelia, in the 'Mother State.' It was hardly pleasant hearing for me, as I travelled from England to Vancouver's Island, but there was no escape from the oft repeated assertion that of all parts of America, Virginia was the worst for a youngster to settle in. Even Virginians did not contradict the statement, and it was with no great expectations that I sought my brother's ranche. Washington itself was so oppressively hot after the brisk air of the Indian summer in Montana, that I only stayed there for one restless night, passing through pretty, busy Richmond next day.

There was some electioneering business going on in Richmond when I passed through, and the town was teeming with energetic people; so that after gazing in amazement at the enormous mules, which to me were the great feature of the town's street-life, I crept away to an oyster-shop and asked for two dozen natives. The people had no 'cherry-stone' or 'blue-points,' but they had several other varieties. So I ordered two dozen of the best they had, and appealed to my friend for his order.

'My dear fellow, you don't mean to say you are going to eat those all yourself?' he asked.

'Why, certainly! and another dozen too, if the first instalment is satisfactory; three dozen oysters won't hurt anyone,' I replied.

'Well, I'll bet you don't half finish your first order. Waiter, bring me half a dozen, and mind you choose small ones!'

And my friend was right. An oyster that has to be cut into six or eight pieces before you can get it into your mouth is a serious monster, and two dozen such are more than enough for any appetite.

As the cars rolled along from Washington to Amelia Court House, the Virginia that I saw was a land of low woods, copper-coloured and golden, lighted here and there by the sun's reflection on fine streams or the broad sheets of woodland lakes. But there seemed very little farm-land, no mountains, no diversity of scenery, and over all hung a heavy sky charged with moist damp heat, enervating to the last degree.

But here we are at the station, and in good sooth that extremely long-legged person in Bedford cords and riding-boots must be my 'little brother.' It is a relief to hear that he doesn't speak Yankee yet; indeed, the chief recommendation of Virginia is that emigrants remain English in this State longer than in any other, at least as far as accent and manners go. Between the station and my brother's house a rough road runs through thick woodlands, pretty but unprofitable. The house itself is, like those of other English settlers in the county, the best part of the farm, and is a well-built little place of four rooms on the ground-floor. Inside, the owner's taste for natural history and a turn for carpentry had made the rooms into pretty compromises between a small museum and an ordinary dwelling. Butterflies and birds' eggs in home-made frames hung on the walls in lieu of pictures; there were skins on the floor for carpets; in place of family portraits, heads of beavers, trapped on the farm, and turkey-cocks with long greenish beards, grinned at you from polished shields; a large collection of pipes, weapons, traps and harness finished the inventory; there was lots of room to put your things on the floor; there were some guinea-hens just outside, and two niggers employed on the farm to catch and cook them for you; there was a fair supply of liquor which arrived along with us, and, as my host said, what could anyone want more?

Young Englishmen may be hard to please at home, but they seem to do wonderfully well with very few luxuries abroad. For my own part, after the first two or three days, I began to think it rather hard about dinner-time to be obliged to first catch your guinea-fowl, then catch your cook (a much harder process), after which you might go and dine safely on something else, and rely on the bird being ready for the morrow. The well, too, is about half a mile or more from the house, and it takes a nigger, as far as my experience goes, about an hour and a half to go there and back.

When you go out to dinner to a neighbour's house, by all means attire yourself in the claw-hammer coat of civilized diners-out in the East, as in anything but your best clothes you would miss some of the pleasure of an evening stroll through the woods on your way home. For instance, on your way to dinner, there is between you and your neighbour's domain a 'crik'—*i.e.*, a water-course of considerable breadth, and waist-deep at least. Across this the simple settler has thrown a rough-hewn tree-stem, and being rather proud of your powers of balance, you walk gaily across it. But wait a bit. On your way home the moon will throw an uncertain light (and very little of it) over everything; you feel as you put foot on the trunk that you don't know which is tree and which shadow, and in a horrible fright you sit down astride the bridge and begin to hop across like a frog or a riding-master's pupil learning to trot.

Half-way over you meet with an obstacle in the shape of a foot and a half of unshorn limb, in hopping over which you either leave a sample of your clothes behind you, or plunge headlong into the stream below. The romance of woodland walks by moonlight is best enjoyed in civilized countries or books.

Sport in Virginia—at least, in the part I visited—is extremely poor. Quail you find, and turkeys, woodcock, plover, jack-rabbits, and an occasional duck. Squirrels would give you sport, but no one here seems to use a rifle. 'Oh, durn your rifles!' said an old settler to me. 'Give me a two-pipe scatter-gun and a spike-tailed smell-dawg, and I'm fixed.' And this gentleman's neatly expressed opinion seems to be pretty generally received.

He might have added a sorry-looking steed to his catalogue of sporting necessaries, and the picture would have been complete.

Three or four times I went out with my gun over my brother's farm and elsewhere, but saw only two or three woodcock and one jack-rabbit, with perhaps a couple of bevies of quail, all the time. And small wonder, for every day you see a different gentleman on horseback carrying a gun, three or four dogs ranging wide around him ; and in this style he runs over the whole country, paying no regard to the sporting rights of the different landowners, and harrying a very wide district in a single day. At night, too, the gentle nigger takes his turn, and you may hear him yelling for all he is worth, in the pursuit of 'possums in your woods. When the hunters by day and hunters by night, together with the claims of poaching dogs, have been considered, it will surprise no one to hear that a bevy of quail to every hundred acres, and one turkey to every twenty gunners, is a fair proportion in Amelia County; and, taking one thing with another, a Virginian sportsman's life is *not* a happy one.

During my stay in the country I visited several very pleasant fellows, who prefer farming in America to a more sedentary life in England. Many of these had been public-school men, or even graduates of Oxford or Cambridge, and their homes were full of tasteful souvenirs of home and the old country. They seemed hard workers and keen farmers, too, but no one of them all claimed that he made farming pay; and more than one admitted that the only person who could hope to make money was the usurer, who, having capital, lent it to his needy neighbour at twelve per cent.

If the niggers I saw in Virginia were fair samples of their class, the black man does not seem to consider his freedom an unmixed good. Those I met told me that they were far better off as slaves than now; that their masters, looking on them as valuable property, fed and clothed them well in health, and obtained the best medical attendance for them in sickness; they were rarely overworked, and living generally all their lives on the same estate, were well looked after by their master or their own relatives in old age. Now they are hired only when there is an absolute necessity for field-labourers; regular employment all the year round is not easy to get, and the majority of them are going away from the land into the towns, where the work is of a lighter kind and more congenial to nigger nature. As for the 'man-and-brother' theory, it is, of course, idle clap-trap. No black man ever was, or ever will be, looked upon in the States or elsewhere as an equal by his white fellow-citizen. Who ever saw a coloured man a guest at the public table of any big New York hotel, for instance? As a matter of fact, the negro has not the 'go' either of white man or Chinaman; he was all very well perhaps in his own country, but among white races he can only fill the position of a dependent and *protégé* of his white employer.

If, said my black friend, who seemed far away the most intelligent specimen of his race I ever met, the Americans had introduced laws for the protection of slaves and in restraint of cruelty and misuse on the part of masters, and forbidden further importation of slaves into the country, they would have done away with the chief evils of slavery, and left the majority of the slaves much happier and more profitable citizens than they are now. So much for Sam's views on slavery. Perhaps he is one among a million, but, at any rate, his are the opinions of one at least among the race chiefly interested in the question of emancipation.

On Sunday the mules were brought round, and, in our best clothes, we rode away to church, the heavy dew on overhanging boughs rapidly removing all the glossiness of our apparel, and reducing a 'masher' collar to a limp and woe-begone wet rag. The church stands in the very middle of the wood, and it is somewhat difficult to know when service is going to begin, as no definite hour seems fixed. The mules are all tied up to trees outside the building, and no surprise is evinced when the whole male congregation makes a rush to the door, returning when half the service is over as if nothing had happened. It is a stampede amongst the mules. During the service at which I assisted, a dog, which had taken up his position within the altar-rails, seemed greatly to incommode the unfortunate clergyman, who experienced considerable difficulty in getting round the intruder without treading on his tail, and thereby causing a scene. Altogether, the Sunday arrangements were distinctly primitive; but it is something that such a small congregation should maintain a church at all.

To sum up my short experience of Virginia, I should say that a good deal may be condoned for the sake of the good-fellowship which exists amongst most of the settlers, and for the sake of the proximity of centres of civilization like Richmond, Washington, and New York; but if you place, on the other hand, an average yield of only eight bushels to the acre of wheat, and land generally poor and played out, though the price is still a good one for the seller and an unremunerative one for the buyer; if you add a relaxing and unhealthy climate (mind, I only speak of the level lands; I know nothing of the mountain district), a paucity of game unequalled on the least-preserved and worst-stocked farms at home; if, I say, you take these things into consideration, reader, you will never send any friend of yours to the worst State in the Union for a young settler to make money or be happy in.

X.

‘TO THE WOULD BE-EMIGRANT.’

JUST one short chapter before I close this book, and then, reader, I'll leave you to go and find out more for yourself, if the subject has interested you, or wait until I can send you further details from British Columbia itself.

Most of us, as we sit over our fire at night, find our thoughts wandering from time to time to some friend who, in the heyday of life, has disappeared from our life's orbit. In nine cases out of ten he is the ‘brightest, cheeriest chap’ we knew, and when we tax our memory for his present whereabouts, we shall find he is ‘cattle-ranching in Wyoming or Montana,’ plucking ostriches at the Cape, or oranges in Florida, or at any rate engaged in some unusual occupation abroad. Most of them, however, have 'gone to America.' There is hardly one family in twenty now in England which has not at some time sent one of its cadets 'out West.'

And the worst of it is that these men who go out from us are not our weaklings; but, gentle or simple, if they are to succeed they must be taken from the number of those we can ill afford to lose. The emigrant class itself is beginning to realize this nowadays, and none too soon. Ne'er-do-weels who won't work, and muffs who can't; unfortunate clerks and professional men, only fitted for a profession at home already crammed to repletion, will find more philanthropists to support them at home than abroad. There are already too many of our shiftless ne'er-do-weels hanging about the American towns to please Brother Jonathan.

I know a town in the States of about a thousand houses, which has five doctors (two at least of them imported from England), and I don't suppose there are a hundred 'cases' to divide between the five in a year. It is a country in which health thrives better than physic.

But since England's population is too big for her, and all her courts thronged with suitors for occupation which she cannot give; since competition at home has grown too keen for any but the greater capitalists, either in brain or money, emigration is a necessary evil, and those who go, if they are of the right sort, will be the gainers. And the right sort is after this manner—small farmers of the hardy Shropshire and Welsh breeds, who on one hundred or two hundred acre farms have for the last seven years fought an uphill fight against bad seasons and heavy lands, grumbling less than their richer and luckier neighbours, and working harder and with their own hands, but in vain. If they will stay at home and fight and hope, Heaven help them and send them better seasons; but if they seek to better themselves abroad, God speed them! *they* are the right sort.

I mention these men specially because I know them best, but any others of a like type would succeed. In fact, *any* English farmer would succeed out West; for though there are no doubt good farmers in America, as a class they seem to me not to have been brought up to their trade as our men have. Labourers, too, and artisans can earn far higher wages out West than we can afford to pay them here; though in many places the cost of living is so high as to take a great deal of the gilt off their gingerbread.

The president of an Oxford college told me that some of his men had gone ostrich-farming, because, having been so often plucked themselves, they expected to be able to perform the operation with the greatest success on their birds.

But apart from 'chaff,' the younger sons of country clergymen and squires, used all their days to village life, fond of farming and field-sports, who have been educated perhaps for the army, and only missed their commissions because they could not be heroes at the same time of examinations and play-grounds—these, if they have a little capital and a large capacity for honest hard work, are also of the right sort.

But, remember, if you would do the best by your sons, reader, don't send them to the first man whose advertisement for farm pupils (especially of the young gentleman class) catches your eye in the newspaper. Farming must be learnt by practice. The practice given your son will take the form of farm-labourer's work for his teacher, and such practice he would get just as well by working for any other farmer for hire, and in this way he would earn a good supply of monthly pocket-money and save his premium, which would be far better spent in a couple of months' cruise in the country of his adoption for the purpose of selecting a locality for himself, before binding himself to what may not be for him the most advantageous spot by investing his capital at the outset. Of course, if you have a friend to whom to send the boy, that makes a difference. But beware of advertisers.

Since, then, the men who are to go from among us are of the very material from which most of England's prosperity and almost all her glory has been rough-hewn in days of old, and since it is best for them to go and we have no longer power to keep them, there remains only one thing for England's real well-wishers to do, and that is to point out as fully as may be to all intending emigrants that there is no need or reason to leave the brave old flag their fathers loved and bled for; that it waves over colonies in every clime which offer to them every chance which the loud-tongued advertisers of America can offer; that in British Columbia and the islands on her coast there is as much freedom, as much chance of success, as much sport, as in any part of the United States; there are cheap farm-lands and a glorious climate, abundant fish and fowl, and industries as yet almost untried; new lines are just opening up the country and letting in fresh blood; and above all, they can remain there—in Canada, in Australia, and throughout our colonies—English subjects still. America is our friend to-day; perhaps she might have been our loyal eldest child, had we had more foresight in the past. But a country which has once warred with another can never again be as truly one with its somewhile foe as if they had always been part and parcel of the same nation. War with America is a thing to pray against, and luckily the last thing to expect. But it is a possibility, and that being so, is it not better to guide our strong-limbed true-hearted wanderers to lands in which they may beget a race of thoroughbred Britishers, who, when statesmen shall have found time to leave little bickerings and foolish philanthropies and turn to matters of importance to the state they are supposed to serve, may be our strongest weapon for defence or offence in a federation of Britain and her colonies which shall contain within its own domains all the products of earth or sea that man can need, and be strong enough to keep the peace of a world?

POSTSCRIPT.

When I laid down my pen a month ago, I thought I had finished my book, and said good-bye to my readers. Since then, however, I have had so many questions put to me by people interested in emigration and anxious to obtain information about America, and the life and prospects of young colonists in our share of that country, that I am tempted to take up my pen again and say a word or two more for the benefit of those who either have already sent sons or capital to that country, or are thinking of doing so now. Unless a man insists on going about the world with his eyes shut, he must nowadays be struck with the number of young fellows of good family and education who are annually leaving our country to seek a competence elsewhere. You can hardly find a family in Great Britain to-day that has not got at least one member at work in one or other of our colonies. It is not only that competitive examinations have closed so many careers to all except those whose strength is in their heads, and who have a natural aptitude for cramming; not only that the lower classes—thanks to their advanced education—are beginning to give up handicrafts and crowd clerkdom with sons who prefer the shabby gentility of a city clerk to the hearty independence of the skilled labouring man, and so hustle the poor gentleman off his last sad refuge—the office-stool; but lots of other causes combine to make the free healthy life of America more and more attractive to our young men. Agricultural distress has made many turn their eyes West who would otherwise have been just able to jog along in some ill-paid profession at home; the difficulty of investing money to pay a reasonably high rate of interest in England has caused others to take their capital to lands in which it will yield a more bountiful return; and a large proportion of educated emigrants have left, and are still leaving England, simply because they are sick of a country in which the legislature is perpetually meddling with private rights instead of attending to public business.

Men are not partizans or great talkers often in the backwoods, but it would do certain politicians no harm to hear the strong language in which Englishmen on frontier farms in America, and by far-away camp-fires, condemn a Government which allowed itself to be bullied by a pack of rebel Irish; which took a licking from a handful of Boers and sought refuge in conciliation—a word defined by Mr. Lowell to mean

> 'Be kicked,
> However well you phrase and tone it.
> It means that we're to sit down, licked;
> That we're poor shots and fain to own it;'

and then, having disgraced the nation abroad, set to work with a will to ram a Ground Game

Act down our throats; to attempt to gag the Opposition; and to aim the first blow at English sport generally by considering a Bill brought forward by a gentleman who appears to think that 'blue rocks' require to be mutilated to make them fly fast (or is it to make them fly slower, that they may be easier to hit?), and that the birds themselves prefer to have their necks twisted or their brains pierced by the butcher's penknife to having a chance for their lives or death by a charge of shot. And whilst England is wasting time thus, a strong foe, with a foreign policy which has never wavered, has pushed steadily nearer to our Indian frontiers, until, in spite of all predictions to the contrary, Russia has steadily fulfilled every prophecy of the Russophobist, has passed one by one the intervening stages, and is now at Merv!

But I apologize for wandering from my subject. Let me get back to humbler themes, and join a band of young English emigrants just leaving the Old Country for the New.

The first thing which I find fault with in my new friends is, that not one in ten has had an idea that his future career was to be that of a colonist until the last few months; until, in fact, he had finally failed to get into Sandhurst, to obtain his degree, or had 'gone that terrible mucker' which led to a very bad quarter of an hour at home, and the final decision that the culprit should leave England, if not for his own benefit, at least to ensure peace of mind to his relations.

As to the emigration of this class, I believe it to be a miserable mistake. If a youngster cannot be kept in the right road at home, in his own country, under the eye of his relations, and when held by all the ties of home associations, it is extremely improbable that he will improve when he is cast loose in a rougher and new world, far from the sight of those whose blame is perhaps the only thing he dreads, and with that most hopeless feeling of all at his heart, that he is exiled, not by his own choice, but for his country's (or at least his family's) good. As to the others, if they failed to pass their examinations because they cultivated their muscles at the expense of their brains, and preferred to be the best 'half-back' or 'straightest bat' in the school to being at the head of every examination list, the only fault to find with them and their friends is, that, such being the case, they did not make up their minds to forego the pleasures of English life sooner, and acquire, whilst there was yet time, such things as would be useful to them in a frontier life. A man who goes out West with anything like a competent knowledge of farming must succeed; for, as far as I saw, not half or a quarter of those now farming have ever been brought up to their trade, or even now practise it systematically. Half the farmers amongst the Americans have been employed in some other line of life until they have reached manhood, or even middle age. I have known in my short sojourn in the West, barber's clerks, railway officials, shopkeepers, and preachers, who have given up their original callings for agriculture, and yet have made a decent livelihood out of the trade of their adoption. If these men can make it pay, how much more should the practical farmer do so, with these rich acres, for which he pays no rent, but buys at a nominal price? Besides, bad times and heavy rents are not the only things which farmers have to contend with in England nowadays, and from which they are free out West.

Rents, indeed, have almost everywhere ceased to be high now. It is the landlord who suffers from bad seasons most, not his tenant. But 'out West' there is no need to come in to the county or market town once a week to sell or buy stock or other farm necessaries; no need, therefore, for a good many glasses of something to warm the hearts of diffident purchasers, or of a good many cigars to talk business over; of 'smartish' cobs and dog-carts to drive in with, and many other things which come of too frequent visits to 'town.' Moreover, there is not a sale to attend about once a week at some neighbour's farm, nor a day's hunting to be had 'just to cheer one up a bit and show the young horse.' In fact, out West the farmer has six days a week to farm in, and can find no excuse for employing any of them otherwise; and since there is no one likely to criticize his appearance, he spends no money on outward show, caring only for what he thinks of his own surroundings, and not for what his neighbours think of them. And this, and the fact that in America all social restrictions are left behind, and no work thought derogatory to the dignity even of the best born and gentlest bred, so long as the work is honest, are the chief things which render America a better field for a young and energetic man than England.

But I should be very sorry to assert that if a man had the pluck and self-denial to work as hard and live as simply and unpretendingly on some English farms as he would be obliged to do in America, he might not succeed almost as well in the Old Country as in the New. Unfortunately, very few men have sufficient strength of character to live amongst their fellows, and be with them but not of them.

I hope I may not be misunderstood in what I have said about the cheering glass, or the one day a week to hounds. No man likes either better than the present writer; no man would see others enjoy them less grudgingly. All I mean is this: In comparing the success of emigrant farmers with farmers at home, it is only fair to remember that, as a set-off against their success, it must be borne in mind that they have to work from dawn to dark for six days a week, at least; that they do all kinds of work for themselves, and take all their reward in a lump called 'success,' or 'a small fortune,' at the end of twenty or thirty years, instead of spreading their fun over their whole lives in the form of sport, social pleasures, home comfort, and the like.

Sport of a kind of course men get out West; but the pursuit of big game requires too much time, and too long journeys, to be as a rule within the reach of farmers; and though wild-fowl shooting is good in places, I never saw anything on the cultivated lands I was over to compare to a day's rough shooting over an English farm. As to society, if the settler chooses to settle on the Eastern coast, the nearer he comes to New York and the big towns, the dearer the land becomes, and, as a rule, the poorer. The farther he goes West, the less society he is likely to find, unless he chooses to locate himself within reach of one of our own colonial centres, like Victoria. As to sending boys out to farm-tutors—gentlemen who offer comfortable homes and instruction in farming to all and sundry tender-feet who choose to come to them, in return for a handsome premium—all I can do is to repeat what all men out West will say to you, 'Don't do it.' There are, no doubt, some men who make a very honest living in this way, and give the youngsters all they can in return for their hundred pounds; but there are a great many more who don't do anything of the kind, who know little enough themselves of any kind of farming, except the farming of English tender-feet. Experience is the only teacher worth paying out West, and he is always to be found, and his lessons are rarely forgotten.

Broadly speaking, comfortable homes—such homes as the fond parents dream of for their boys when they pay their premiums—don't exist out West. What the teacher does for the boy is this: He gives him board and bed. The lad lives with the tutor's family; so, in the same degree, do the farm-labourers. The lad is required to help on the tutor's farm, and works at whatever labour the seasons bring. In this way is he taught, and no better plan for teaching him could possibly be devised; but he could get the same tuition, the same board and lodging, and the same social advantages, *and* a dollar a day for his labour, without the payment of any premium, by merely calling himself what he is, a farm labourer, instead of what he is not, a farm pupil. If the parents know some one of many years' experience in farm life out West, with whom are already quartered several young fellows of the same class and education as their own boy, and they feel that their youngster is hardly old enough to 'paddle his own canoe' as yet, by all means let them then pay the premium for the friend's supervision, and for the sake of the society the boy will get. But the people I am trying to warn Englishmen against are the host of advertisers, whose prey is the verdant tenderfoot. Far better for the boy, if you have a hundred pounds to spare, to give it to him, to spend in wandering through the New Country, in order that he may see for himself where money is most likely to be made, and where life would be most enjoyable and profitable at the same time.

The name of the ventures in which men engage now in the newer lands of America is legion, but perhaps cattle-ranching, wheat farming, lumber mills, salmon-canning, orange growing in Florida, and viticulture in California, with ostrich farming as the latest novelty, attract the greatest share of capital and enterprise from England. Of wheat growing I have spoken at some length in writing of Washington Territory; of salmon-canning, men complain that the market is glutted, and of cattle-ranching, that the best lands are most of them already filled up. As to that, we have in the Peace River country probably the greatest cattle land ever yet opened up, and as yet no herds, save those of its wild denizens, have cropped its grasses. Of orange growing and cattle-ranching, most men will still tell you that from 20 to 25 per cent. may be made on money invested in them; but to live in one's own orange-grove all the year round is impossible for an Englishman, or almost so, thanks to the fever and heat which render Florida intolerable; and if you have an agent to manage your affairs for you, you must be the luckiest of men, or a loser of a considerable share of that 20 per cent. talked of above. Grape growing in California is perhaps one of the most attractive industries of America, and one which, though it is rapidly being overcrowded, is likely to repay the grape grower handsomely.

The Californian climate is a healthy and delightful one, and the work pleasant compared to most of those by which men earn their bread in the sweat of their brow. At the present moment California produces ten million gallons of wine per annum, for which there is a ready demand at from 25 to 30 cents the gallon at the cellars as soon as the wine is fit for transportation; and sufficient wine grapes are now planted to produce 40 million gallons per annum after the next five years. Whether the demand will keep pace with the supply is uncertain, as at present the Americans are not great consumers of wine, and new wines take a long time to establish themselves in foreign countries. The original Californian vine, introduced by the Spanish Missions, is a free bearer, and is much used in most of the Californian wines, though the grape is said to produce a strong unwholesome wine, by no means equal to the wine made from Zinfandel grapes, which bears a considerable resemblance to Carlowitz. Zinfandel is rapidly becoming the chief vine of the country.

In the cooler districts of California, in rich deep land, the Riesling grape is grown, from which a white wine is made, to my mind far away the best of all the Californian wines. These wines, and a light white wine called Gutedel, made from the sweetwater grape, are the chief wines of California; but some of the more enterprising of the wine growers of the country have recently introduced some of the higher class Bordeaux and Burgundy grapes, of which small quantities of good wine have already been made. The only objection to growing these high-class grapes, is that they are not free bearers, they require high training on stakes, and as wages in California are as high as 30 dollars a month and board, this adds largely to the cost of production.

The price obtainable for the wine thus grown is unfortunately not in proportion to the increased cost of production. The grower gets 30 dols. a ton for Zinfandel, producing four to five tons per acre and not more than 40 dols. for a ton of high class wine, the vines for which would only yield a ton and a half to the acre and require a much more expensive system of cultivation. Besides grapes grown for wine, large quantities are grown for the table and for conversion into raisins. Altogether, perhaps, the United States offer no more tempting field for the energies and capital of fairly well-to-do young Englishmen than the vineyards of California; but it should be borne in mind that the outlay in this business is very considerable, and the profits do not begin to come in for some time.

Good land for vineyards costs as much as 200 dols. an acre, or with vines in bearing 1,000 dols. per acre. If you buy your land and plant, your vines don't begin to bear for five years, and are only in full bearing for eight years after. The nett returns average from 75 to 150 dols. the acre.

There I think is a very fair sketch of one of the most attractive industries in the United States, supplied to me by a friend who is himself engaged in California wine-growing. If you are rich enough to come home from January 1st to May, during which time it rains pretty regularly, you might do worse, reader, than become a Californian viticulturist; but though I have only had three months experience of America, let me offer you a piece of advice gratis. You may take it or leave it, as you please. If you are going to America to live, to make yourself a new home, and rear your children there, go not to the loudly advertised States, but to what is only an extension of your own home, Canada or British Columbia. Of course, a vast number of us must leave England. The dear old island is too small to hold us all; but because we can't live in the very heart of our Empire, that is no reason why we should leave her altogether.

They tell us that Great Britain contains only 120,000 square miles, an area which can now barely contain or support her teeming population; they tell us that this said population doubles itself every seventy years. Well, be it so, English enterprise and English courage have bought with English blood and life and well spent energy territories in all parts of the world which seem almost illimitable.

In speaking of America, men too often forget that America means any more than the United States. A glance at the map shows us that our flag floats over half of North America, that two million square miles of the continent belonging to us is capable of cultivation, of which enormous area one half will grow any crop grown in Great Britain.

The corn-fields of Manitoba, averaging they say 28 bushels to the acre, are as good as, or better than, any in the States. Wyoming and Montana are for the most part taken up for ranching purposes, but the wonderful pastures of the Peace River country are still untenanted. Grapes and oranges we do not grow in British territory as far as I know, but in any other product of earth or sea, or minerals under the earth, our share of North America is as rich as any part of Yankeedom.

Since, then, necessity compels and will compel a large portion of our people to emigrate, and since these, if they are to be successful, must be men of the very best bone and fibre of our country, of the sort that has won us not only our national glory, but our material prosperity in times past; it behoves all lovers of England to guide them in their going, so that though they leave Great

Britain, it may only be for a province of that Greater Britain beyond the seas.

Apart from the fact that British America is as rich in natural products as the United States, here are two reasons out of many why Englishmen should settle in British America, rather than in the States. The first is for the good of the mother country. Not only does the English emigrant to our colonies add to the wealth of the empire, by bringing its untilled property into a state of profitable cultivation, but also by consuming the manufactures which England produces. And that a colonist does more for us here in England as a consumer of our produce than he would do as an emigrant to an alien State, the Board of Trade Returns quoted by Sir Alexander Galt clearly show. Quoting from these in a speech before the Colonial Institute in London, he stated that during the three years then under consideration, the English emigrants to the United States had consumed only 8s. 4d. per man per annum in English manufactures, whilst emigrants to Canada had consumed, during the same period, at the rate of 32s. per man per annum, thus showing that emigrants to Canada were, during those three years, at any rate, as mere consumers of English produce, more profitable to the mother country at the rate of about four to one than the emigrants to the United States.

My second reason directly concerns the individual emigrant. I have no wish to say hard things of the Americans, but plain speaking is a habit with Englishmen, and if any of our cousins across the herring pond ever read what I have written, they must forgive the habit in me. Americans are our very good friends, and very good fellows, too, many of them; though, perhaps, if they would keep their home-made dynamite for home consumption, we should like them none the worse for it. Yet, for all that, though I met a number of English emigrants during my travels, who had passed many years in the

States, I never met one yet who would admit that the Yankee folk much resembled the old folk at home. A settler in the frontier territories, United States, sees, of course, the roughest side of the Yankee character, and it was of that side that a quondam Gloucestershire yeoman was speaking when he told me, 'I tried to settle first in the States, but I couldn't get on anyhow with the people. They generally called me a sanguinary Britisher if they only wanted to be polite, and when they were pleased, swore so awfully that you couldn't sit in the rooms with them.' Then there is another thing. A Yankee appears to live only for the dollar. Our men like dollars, but believe that the dollar was made for man, not man for the dollar.

The perpetual fever of speculation in United States frontier towns, or on a Yankee line of rail, is enough to engender lunacy in an average Englishman. In our American colony there is plenty of push and energy, but life is not a mere fitful fever, and our colonists try to get some sport and pleasure out of life, quite apart from gambling. Finally, then, since no Englishman can wish to belong to any race but his own—since he is able to do better as an Englishman acquiring land in an English colony, than by acquiring land as an alien, or even as a naturalized American in the United States of America—since it is best for his country and best for him to emigrate (if he must emigrate) to what is only an expansion of his home land—I pray him to bear these things in mind, so that when the land of illimitable possibilities (as Lord Beaconsfield aptly called it) shall have reared its race of stalwart prosperous British colonists, his children may stand amongst those who, in the federation of England with her colonies, still keep the old flag of our country well in the forefront of the nations.

THE SPITZBERGEN SWINDLE.

APOLOGY.

'I AM going to spring a mine on you, I fear,' said the publisher to the author one day, when, in all the buoyant spirits of a father, that ill-starred man went to see his last literary venture emerge from the long-clothes of blue foolscap, into a brand-new short frock of the duodecimo description, cost-price six shillings and sixpence, and, we venture to hope, cheap at the money. 'The trouble was' (to use an Americanism), that for six shillings and sixpence the author's thoughts and experiences ought to have spread over at least four hundred pages. They had covered some 6,000 miles, but not being gifted with sufficient verbosity, his story had not covered an amount of foolscap in proportion to his wanderings.

Hence the literary baby was still too small for its new frock. What should have been a book would only be a pamphlet, and issued at six shillings and sixpence would be an impertinence to the much-respected British public. Luckily for the author he had a reasonable task-master to deal with. 'Bricks without straw, I cannot make,' he feebly murmured. 'I don't want you to,' said the austere man at the other side of the table, 'nor shall you pad or dilute what you have written. Can't you give us further wanderings of the same tenderfoot elsewhere?'

In consequence of this suggestion, being 'willinger than Willing to give the people twelve-pence for their shilling,' I have added to my summer ramble in British North America, another which took place some years back in a still more northerly clime—Spitzbergen.

THE SPITZBERGEN SWINDLE.

I.

NORTHWARD HO!

I SUPPOSE everyone in this world indulges from time to time in that laziest of all amusements—day-dreams. A good dinner and a quiet weed form, perhaps, the favourite prelude to most men's day-dreams, acting on them as opium does on the native of the Celestial Empire. For me, when I want to day-dream, I ask nothing better than a day in June of the old-fashioned kind, a hammock swung under my favourite beech-tree, and the last copy of the *Field*. It isn't the interior of this seductive newspaper that I study, however good that may be. I don't care about the wonderful tiger stories, or the leading articles of a legal tendency, limb of the law though I be; nor do I study the farming portion and dream wild dreams of tenants who won't ask for further reductions, or, more wildly still, of taking my acres into my own hands and by means of 'Belgian hares,' fruit-growing, or siloes, making amateur farming a profitable undertaking.

No! I don't care a button about what men have done, but, turning to the advertisement sheets, I prefer to dream of what men may do in the glorious future. What can you not obtain by consulting those wonderful columns, if only you are possessed of the golden key! Grouse-shootings and deer-forests, amid such scenery as William Black's pen wanders through; country houses of idyllic beauty, with so many packs of hounds within easy reach that your only difficulty would be to decide with whom to hunt; fishing-cottages in Wales, where trout and sewin always rise freely, and luxury enough for a prince's honeymoon go hand in hand with perfect sport; horses such as Melville or Gordon never conjured up in their most poetic moments. Or if your ambition soars above such commonplace pursuits as fox-hunting and angling, there are always plenty of advertisers ready and willing to take you, as one of a carefully selected party of first-rate sportsmen, to shoot elephants on the Congo, or lions on the Limpopo—nay more, to provide you with every necessary, with food and drinks (they don't add 'ice,' but I dare say you could have that too, at a trifling extra cost), and, above all, guarantee you success in your 'shoot.'

But the day to which my memory takes me back was too hot for elephants to attract me. I could only remember Mr. Selous' stories, of how he had to run over the driest of sands by the hour, carrying an elephantine rifle the while, before ever he got a shot, and even then, with the giant at his feet, he had not wherewithal to wash down his success. As I lifted my claret-cup to my lips I decided that elephant-shooting was too hot to think about in June. For awhile I lay watching the mowers as, all in line, they swept their scythes, to a sort of rhythm, through the sweet-scented grass, and half thought that I had better spend the summer at home with my wife, rather than wander farther to fare worse. But the *Field* has lures for all manner of men in every mood, and as my eye fell on the following advertisement my fate was sealed for the next two months. I won't quote it *in extenso*, but it was something after this fashion: A philanthropist of Norwegian origin, having in view the sufferings of his fellow-men in sultry Great Britain, had chartered the best of all possible steam-yachts; had engaged the greatest of Arctic pilots, whalers and whale-boats, cooks too good for the London clubs, and many other things and persons, all of which he proposed to put at the disposal of such British sportsmen as should choose to accompany him on a cruise to Spitzbergen. Bears and reindeer, weird seals and walrus, whales as long as a steamer and game as half-pound brook-trout, to say nothing of splendid salmon-fishing and unlimited fowling—what sport could be more inviting? and, better than all, in these June days, you got to it without much exertion, and took it all 'iced.'

To a married man, the worst of all these expeditions after big game is that you are obliged, for the most part, to leave your *cara sposa* behind, and call down upon yourself abuse more or less deserved in consequence. To tell her you were going to Spitzbergen in the interests of science, besides being untrue, might probably be bad policy. If she showed a decent regard for you she would refuse to grant you leave of absence, on the score that most of those who went towards the North Pole stayed there; or, if she took the matter lightly, you would hardly escape the unpleasant conviction that the prospect of becoming widow's weeds was not as appalling as it ought to be to any right-minded young woman. But our Norwegian *entrepreneur* had solved this difficulty beforehand. The audacious man proposed to civilize the regions round the Pole by taking with him 'such of the sportsmen's wives as should be disposed to join the expedition.' And all this, reader, at a cost of £20 per head. Perhaps it is a fallacy, but I have always indulged in a belief that a wife of the right sort would be no serious disadvantage in a well-organized expedition to the wilds. It is, of course, too late to offer advice on the subject now, for once the ladies have entered into that holy of holies, the House of Commons, they will either disdain such trivial pursuits as sport and travel, or organize their own expeditions without our aid. My wife, however, was one of the least ambitious of women, had no idea of her rights, and at first was rather overcome at the idea of joining a North Pole expedition. Once fairly committed to the venture by an order to the dressmaker, there was no drawing back, and for a week the conversation, from daylight to dark, revolved round 'Polar' subjects. Wonderful costumes were constructed with a view to warmth, and in spite of all I could say as to the mildness of the summer season on the west coast of Spitzbergen, it was touch-and-go whether that fair form equipped itself in a costume which would literally melt the heart of a Lap or not.

We were to join our party at Shields, and when the day for starting came, I fancy most of the inhabitants of our pretty Gloucestershire village looked on us as maniacs of the most pronounced type, and seriously meditated on the advisability of temporary confinement for me by way of saving that 'poor young thing,' my wife, from the certain death to which her lunatic husband was leading her. As for our rector, I fancy he would like to have read a sort of funeral service over us before starting, though for that matter his views of all sea voyages are peculiar. Any nearer approach to the ocean than a day at Henley would have been to him heroic martyrdom, though perhaps a frozen sea would be less appalling to him than any other on account of its probable stability. When the last handkerchief had waved its last farewell, the May-fly season was well over, so that except for a twinge of regret for the tennis - parties and the strawberries, we sorrowed little over the things we had left behind us.

Of course, to take a young traveller with you, especially if she is of the softer sex, adds a good deal to your troubles, but I am far from sure that these troubles have not adequate compensations. The old traveller, if alone, or with another kindred spirit, is too apt, having procured all necessary creature-comforts, to doze through the first part of his journey and miss much of the fun which was his when he first began his travels. But an inexperienced companion saves him from this, and reminds him of the beauty which he has grown blind to from familiarity. But, however a man may have travelled, there is enough to rouse him to attention in Shields. I speak with all respect of that town, but I am still anxious to discover what the language is in which its little boys converse.

We had wandered down to a kind of quay, round the slimy posts of which a shoal of half-clad and amphibious urchins were at play, to see if we could find out anything about the steamer which was to take us to Bergen, the first stage of our journey. I believe I was looking at the little chaps as a kind of northern curiosities, when I had the tables unexpectedly turned on me. A look of intense interest spread on their dirty faces, and in a couple of minutes they were swarming round me like sparrows round crumbs, all eyes fixed on the crown of my head. I began to have a suspicion that they could see that my brain was turned, and that I was starting on a wild-goose chase to the far north, when a little hand was pointed at my hat and a solemn little voice exclaimed:

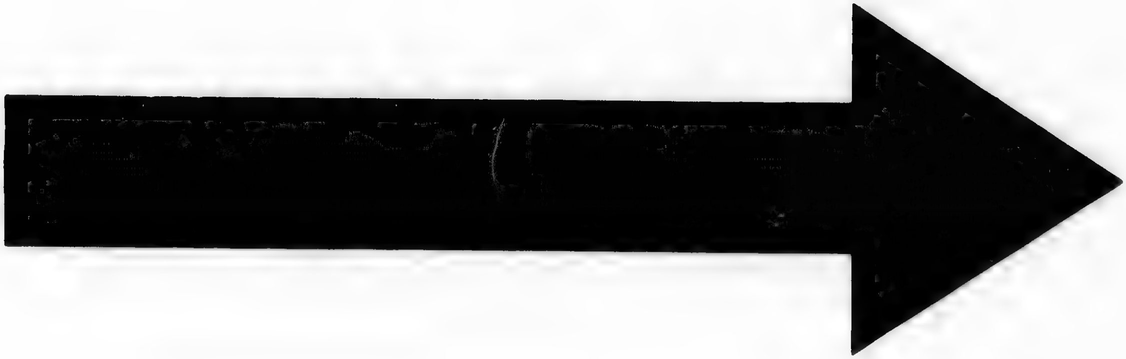
'Eh, mon, he's gotten a "logger" in his bonnet!'

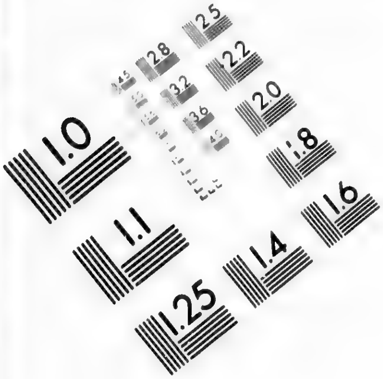
A 'logger' I found on inquiry meant a butter-fly or a bee; but in either case they were wrong, for it was one of Mr. Ogden's best green drakes at about three and sixpence a dozen. The little savages ought to have known better than to call that glorious insect a bee; I'm afraid the board school is not as efficient as it should be in Shields.

By-and-by other figures caught our eye, by the quays and hanging round the chief hotel. Figures, for the most part, in irreproachable plaid shooting-suits, terminating in knickerbockers and the most formidable of legs. Across their ample shoulders hung, as on the Derby-day, a pair of field-glasses. On their faces, too, a seal was set. A look of semi-shame, as of men about to commit a shady action, and an inquisitive desire to know each other's business.

If you tracked any of these suspicious characters to the hotel, you would surely find them contemplating a huge pile of queer-looking baggage—rods and rifles and such-like gear; and maybe, on the stairs, you would get a glimpse of a female form not dressed in all the beauty of lace and coloured garments, but in almost ostentatiously plain apparel, with innumerable pockets and storm-proof appliances. For the most part these atoms of what would soon form our little world held jealously apart, regarding each other as if every man thought his neighbour a pickpocket, or a washerwoman whose bill he had not settled. It was no good standing by your luggage and brandishing your Spitzbergen label in a fellow-voyager's face. There was no one to introduce us to each other, and for the time being we clung to the Briton's privilege of keeping ourselves to ourselves.

One bold Scotchman alone dared to break the ice, and collected some half-dozen waifs around him, amongst others my wife and myself; and in his company, feeling strong in our numbers, we ventured to quiz our neighbours more cheerily, and eventually summoned up courage to obtain a boat and go off in search of our steamer. Never have I seen a

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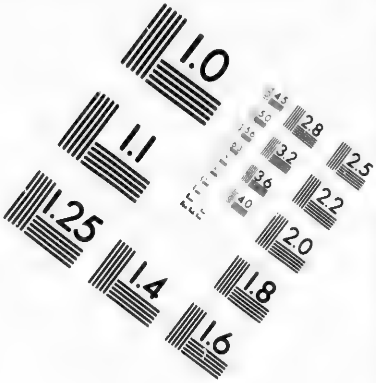
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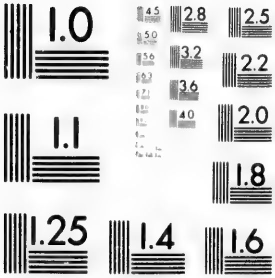
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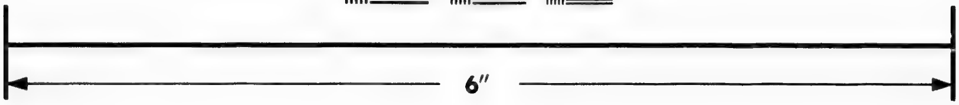

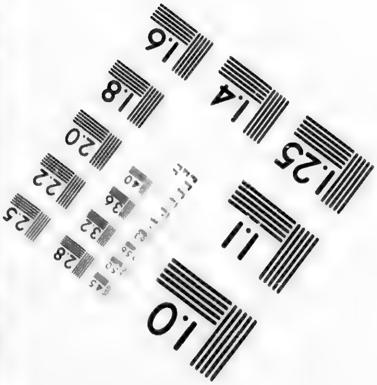
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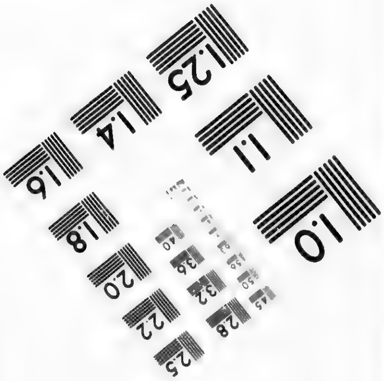
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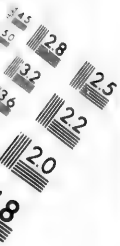
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boat so loaded. Mr. Plimsoll's heart must have broken had he seen the risk we ran—the narrow line between the water and the edge of the gunwale, and the vast pile of 'smallest possible trunks' under which the Scotchman and myself were expected to stow our legs. Quizzing others was all very well to waifs and strays in our strong confederation of four, but when at last we came alongside of the steamer and saw the bulk of the passengers already on board inspecting us, the tables were indeed turned. It was almost as bad as the first day at school again; and how (I appeal to my non-nautical brethren) is a landsman to effect a dignified entry into a new world up a ladder over a ship's side?

When we were all assembled, I think there were, at a rough guess, about twenty men and seven ladies. The names of the passengers I mean to omit for my own ends, inventing, as I go along, such names as seem good to me, or introducing them by the nicknames by which they were known on board.

Whatever the palatial yacht awaiting us at Bergen might be like, the steamer in which we first found ourselves was not much to boast about, and her accommodation was limited in the extreme. Of course, being English, we began with a really good grumble, and ended in a laugh at each other's troubles and our own; after which everybody displayed an amount of self-denial and courtesy in favour of the ladies, highly creditable to humanity and their nationality and decidedly gratifying to the husbands, who, however much they regretted inconveniencing their bachelor neighbours, were under the pleasant necessity of sharing the good accommodation which fell to the lot of their wives. One lady only was unencumbered with male belongings, and indeed she had no need of such trifles. With the courage and decision of a Napoleon, she at once established herself in the captain's cabin, and no threat nor any blandishment or offer of a whole cabin to herself elsewhere would induce her to leave her post of vantage. She had engaged a separate cabin, and meant to have one. This was the only one untenanted by other passengers. The captain might fulfil his employer's contract or shift for himself. And he had to do both, for though disturbed in the early morning by an injudicious steward with hot water and shaving material, the gallant lady held her own, and filled our hearts with envy and admiration for her courage. Though in the beginning the social atmosphere had been almost as severely chilling as that of the climes whither we were bound, a thaw immediately set in, and before nightfall ladies were exchanging invaluable recipes for the prevention of sea-sickness, and the men their coppers over that attractive game called Nap.

The party was of a very composite character, and bent on many different ends. There were four or five really keen sportsmen; a couple of thorough-going field-naturalists, anxious to collect anything, from a whale's skeleton to the remnant of a cod's breakfast, obtained from him by dissection; sketchers and scenery-hunters; and last, but not least, a fairly large body of yachting people who wanted to make their home on the bounding wave, smoke, drink, loaf, and do all other things generally understood by the verb 'to yacht.' With these there came such a store of good things to eat, drink, and make merry with, that if the ship had had no stores of her own we could have defied starvation for a week and sobriety for a month.

Over those first two days on the North Sea let me draw a veil. They were days during which the ladies suffered and were still; days during which manhood displayed the courage of the Stoic, and under the smile which thanked the yachtsman for his proffered weed, cursed the giver for a gift that cost more pangs than ever the hidden fox inflicted on the Spartan boy. Still, most of our miseries were those of anticipation. The bad weather never came, and even the weakest grew boastful of his nautical constitution just about bedtime on the last night on board.

At Bergen the first complaint against our *entrepreneur* was heard, and it came chiefly from the Benedicts of the party. Bergen is a pretty place enough; tolerable beer may be obtained in it, and two days spent there, if you are in no hurry to proceed, will do no one any harm if he be in the enjoyment of single blessedness. But two days amongst the old-silver shops and the furriers of Bergen, with a helpmate endued with a keen appreciation of the beautiful and a sense of martyrdom undergone during two whole days for your sake—a martyrdom as yet unrequited—is quite another story, and the first twenty-four hours of this kind of thing made most of our pockets grow light as our hearts grew heavy. Luckily some one suggested a trout-fishing excursion, and most of the married men being anglers, carrioles were ordered, and the expedition started. The face of the one Benedict left behind, who had as yet never learnt the gentle art, and so was without excuse for leaving the town and its terrors, was a caution to all who have not yet become sworn followers of old Izaak.

Many men will tell you that unless you pay heavily for it, there is no fishing to be had now in Norway. Yet we had a very fair day at the end of our merry race up hill and down dale in our quaint little carriages, and obtained it all simply by a few civil words to a farmer on the river-banks and a little silver expended at his house in payment for a most excellent luncheon of milk, molte-berries, and other good things. It is true we caught no great quantity of fish, but they were there to be caught, and we none of us went away empty-handed, whilst our Scotch friend had a very merry ten minutes with a good salmon, who owed his life to the light tackle and trout-rod in the hands of his enemy, rather than to any virtue in himself.

From Bergen we coasted up to Trondjhem, where we were again detained for the convenience of our *entrepreneur*, who, in addition to making what he could out of the expedition by carrying cargo from port to port along the coast, was a young man of jovial tendencies, who spent much time with the many friends he met at every stage of our journey, in the consumption of beer and tobacco. Some of us, I think, forgave him for the delay at Trondjhem, for the sake of the glimpse we got of the cathedral, which the Government is slowly repairing there. It is worth more money and zeal than seems to be expended upon it; and anything more solemnly beautiful than Olaf Trygessen's white Christ, as it stands in the subdued light from those simple blue glass windows, I have never seen. Our old church-windows at Fairford, attributed by local tradition to Albert Durer, are very magnificent when the sun streams through on the old oak within; but whoever planned those windows of pale blue caught a light from his own Arctic region, and threw on the white Christ a colour which we only saw again on the glaciers of Magdalena Bay.

Too many men have written before me of the fiords of Norway for me to dwell upon them here at any length. All day long the ladies sat and tried to catch the colours of rocks and hillsides that changed like opals at every moment, or to draw the outline of scenes that varied at every revolution of the screw. Beautiful as are the fiords of British Columbia, aided by a glory of forest growth which Norway lacks, the colouring of the American fiords is tame to that of their Norwegian rivals.

I shall never forget the state of exasperation to which we were all reduced about 1 a.m. one morning off Bödö, when, having tried every colour in our combined paint-boxes, we sat and gazed in mute despair at the path of rainbow colours that seemed to stretch across the waters from us to the midnight sun. I know two men swore they would paint no more that trip, and one kept his vow. Looking at some of the sketches you see in London of northern scenery, you are tempted at first to cry out against the vividness of the colouring. If you could only see the country depicted, glowing with midnight sunshine, you would admit that, far from being too strong, the artist's copy was but 'as water unto wine.'

I think it was about the last week in July when we arrived at Tromsö, the port from which we were to sail straight out to the land of the white bear. I know we were all getting very sick even of the beauties of the fiords, with their calm water and little fleets of fishing-craft sheltering among the islands. We had too many weapons of destruction on board to be quite happy in a land, however beautiful, in which there was nothing to kill. The sight of a reindeer once on a wild bluff, almost within shot, brought an array of firearms perfectly appalling on to the deck in less than no time; nor was it easy to save that reindeer's life by assuring the eager gunners that the poor beast was as much a domestic animal as the homely cow.

There is a little island with a hole through it called Torghatten, at which it was considered advisable to make some stay, and here our riflemen first landed in their might. Two-and-twenty riflemen leaped ashore upon that innocent islet, and conquering their eagerness for slaughter by an effort, spent many valuable minutes in assisting seven or eight fair ladies, equipped with paint-boxes and umbrellas, to land also. Like locusts, the invading force spread over the island; the inhabitants—one woman and two children—flying wildly before it, until captured and interrogated by a long-legged Scotchman who led our van. The ladies, I think, had the best of the expedition, for what with botanical specimens, mölte-berries and sketches, they made a very fair mixed bag; but for us men there was nothing to shoot worth shooting—not a single seal rewarded our search, and I believe the collective bag of the whole party was two oyster-catchers and a young eider-duck, shot by the naturalist for the sake of its 'immature plumage.'

At Tromsö we made a stay for a day or two, and filled up our time with visits to the Lapp camp and shooting expeditions in the neighbourhood. The Lapps, unfortunately, were, like their reindeer, too tame to be very interesting, making more money by exhibiting themselves and selling their knives, reindeer-bone spoons and such-like trifles to tourists, than in any less civilized fashion. The scent of their savagery alone clings to them persistently, and a full-grown Lapp in an old coat of reindeer hides can on a good scenting morning be as easily distinguished at a distance as the heaps of drying fish which fringe these shores and make the air abominable. Bird-life abounds round Tromsö, and for those who care to shoot kittiwakes and skuas there is plenty to do; but bird-shooting in the breeding season is not likely to attract anyone worthy of the name of a sportsman. We tried hard to secure a seal, but though we saw several we got none, and though we landed at several points to secure specimens of the different gulls, eggs and young, we met with so much opposition from the natives interested in egg-collecting at the gulleries, that we even gave up that quest in despair. A storm of abuse from Norwegian peasant women is no joke, as we found to our cost. The 'silent north' is a term that certainly does not apply to the northern end of Norway. It is the incessant movement and ubiquitous restless life of these seas that most strikes the new-comer. From the sun that never sets, but day and night floods everything with wonderful colour, to the gulls who seem busy feeding and fighting incessantly for the whole twenty-four hours, nothing seems to take rest. All day long and all night through, the cries of the kittiwakes were heard in the harbour, and all the while the hawk-like skuas poised and darted amongst busy crowds of fishing-birds, robbing them of their well-earned prey. This restless activity was infectious, and on board our little steamer no one ever seemed to know when it was time to go to bed or to dine. Meals indeed, of one kind or another, were of perpetual recurrence, thanks in a measure to the wonderful effect of this bracing northern air on our appetites.

However, the day of our departure came at last, and the arrival of our last passenger, a professional taxidermist from Tromsö, was the signal to get up our anchor and be off. One of the holds had been cleared for this last comer, and there he worked for us all, on an average fourteen hours a day. The supply of specimens was enormous, as everyone wanted some trophies to take home, and when we were not engaged in killing, most of the men of the party might be found at work in an amateur way below. The smells were not of the sweetest, but what with comic songs and lessons in natural history we did very well, until we sighted Spitzbergen on the third day out. The aroma that is exhaled from a whaler on the homeward voyage may be worse than most things high-scented, but our taxidermist's den, full of fish-fed victims, would have run it very close.

At first our skinner had little else to do but prepare such common birds as kittiwakes, oyster-catchers, and the like; but as we got farther out at sea new forms of bird-life began to appear. A band of kittiwakes followed in the ship's wake from Norway; but next morning, besides them and their tyrants the skuas, who came with them, there were a number of short stout-built birds, with dark mottled plumage, and strong sailing flight, skimming about our bows; and thenceforth, until we passed Bear Island on our way home, the 'Molly auks,' or fulmar petrels, were never out of sight.

Away to the east of us the old sailing-master pointed out a pale kind of gleam, just between sky and water, the herald of the frozen land we were nearing, known to Arctic voyagers as the 'ice-blink.' Several times during the day the huge backs of whales rolled out of the water alongside of us, and on one occasion seven were seen spouting round us at the same time. Guillemots kept whirling past our bows in little packs of from five to twenty-five, affording excellent practice for the gunners. Indeed, we were enjoying some exciting ‘sweeps,’ when a deputation arrived from the ladies on board to command us to cease firing. They would have no needless waste of life on board. No doubt they were right at that time, for we could not stay to gather our dead; but later on, when the ship was at anchor, not a guillemot or a puffin was wasted. Every bird is clean to a Norwegian cook, and those that were not boiled down in our soup for immediate consumption were transferred to tubs, in which they were salted for winter use.

From Tromsö we sailed away almost due north, one or other of us continually in the crow’s-nest. A feeling of keen excitement had spread amongst ladies and men alike, and everyone hung on old Elling Carlsen’s words as if he was an oracle. And, indeed, no better authority could perhaps be found in these northern seas than the staunch old knight of St. Olaf, who won his spurs amongst the everlasting ice; who first, as long ago as 1863, sailed round Spitzbergen, and eight years afterwards accomplished the same feat in regard to Novaia Zemlia. He it was who piloted the ill-starred Tegethoff, when, all against her will, she discovered Franz Josef Land, after drifting for two long years at the mercy of the ice. And yet, in spite of his life spent in these weird, dreary lands, the veteran ice-pilot is as cheery and bright an old man as you could wish to smoke a pipe with, and a devoted admirer of the ladies to boot.

When we passed the Loffotens many of us thought that those wild peaks just tipped with a watery storm-light, through which the clouds came rolling up ragged and brown, were as drear and awesome as any scenery could be, even within the Arctic circle; but when, in the grey morning, the tall peak of Mount Misery rose from cold grey wreaths of mist on our starboard bow, a field of ice some fifteen miles broad separating us from it, we admitted that the farther north we sailed the wilder grew the face of nature. Nor was it the weirdness of the scenery alone that depressed us. Success in our venture began to grow extremely doubtful, and a return to Tromsö with our tails between our legs more and more probable.

Bear Island was so beset with ice as to be utterly unapproachable, and, as far as we could see, there was no way through the floe to Spitzbergen. For twelve hours we tacked and veered from one point of the compass to another, seeking a passage through the ice; Carlsen and the captains of our whale-boats taking turns in the crow's-nest, and all half inclined to turn back.

Meanwhile the submerged bergs bumped and ground against our craft in a way far from encouraging to nervous mariners. A wind had sprung up, and the sea round us was tossing and heaving, full of detached bergs, which necessitated very cautious navigation on our part in a vessel but inadequately prepared for the rough usage of Arctic seas. Those who knew most of the dangers of these seas looked gloomy, but the ladies behaved splendidly, not a murmur or single suggestion of retreat escaping their lips.

Their pluck had its reward towards morning, when, on coming up on deck, we found ourselves in a broad channel of open water, by means of which we got to the north of the floe, and on the morning of July 26th sighted the south cape of Spitzbergen.

It was a dull and stormy morning, and the dead-brown peaks, ragged and sharp, rose abruptly from the heavy wreaths of grey mist that hid the sea at their feet. Between us and them two finner-whales spouted and slowly rolled their huge forms through the water. Flight after flight of eider-fowl skimmed swiftly by, the wily drakes always keeping their sober-coloured mates between themselves and danger. This habit of the eider-fowl we noticed again and again during our stay in these seas; and indeed so invariably shy were the drakes that I believe only five were bagged between the whole party. Another bird had in the last few hours been monopolizing the attention of our naturalists, a little well-fed saucy fellow who would almost let himself be run down by our steamer before he would take the trouble to move on; and then when he did make up his mind to go, was so full-fed that after a few feeble attempts to fly, he was obliged to give up the effort and flop down head first into the depths of ocean for safety.

These were rotges, or little auks, the prettiest and most numerous of all Spitzbergen's feathered hosts. Our naturalists soon added some of our new friends to the horrors of the skinner's hold.

Whilst the boats were away with our ornithological party, those left on board were not idle. Cod were swarming round the ship, and soon every lady on board was provided with a spoon-bait, long hand-line, and a devoted squire to haul up and unhook her fish when caught. And, indeed, some of the fish were almost too heavy for the ladies to land unaided—fifteen pounds of very vigorously-kicking codfish is no joke to haul up on to the deck of a steamer.

All the fish caught were foul-hooked, our instructors in the art teaching us to sink the bait as far as possible, and then draw it slowly up again until we struck something. I have no notion what our bag was, but I remember the landing of the fish kept us all busily employed until the naturalists' boats came home; and cod formed a prominent item in our bill of fare for the rest of our stay in Spitzbergen waters.

Nor did the usefulness of our cod end there. When all the winged things of these waters had been collected by our ornithologists, these worthies held a post-mortem examination on all the fish caught, and extracted and bottled all manner of water-insects from their interiors.

More diligent devotees to science never existed than our two friends; for when neither shooting nor skinning specimens of the avi fauna of Spitzbergen, they were invariably birds-nesting on shore, dragging the depths of the sea with a weapon of their own contriving for marine monsters, or patiently cleaning and collecting the bones of rotting white-whales left on shore by their original captors, surrounded by a stench that would drive away anything but a naturalist or an ivory gull.

Poor men of science, they had but an evil time of it! After much patient toil, they would triumphantly deposit their spoils on deck. No one looked really cheerful at the unsavoury additions to our cargo, but their friends admired the collectors if they didn't care about the collections. But with the simple Norwegian it was otherwise.

If the bones of a whale, now comparatively clean, came on board, they were piously buried in their native element by some anonymous person as soon as the owner's back was turned. Was a skua brought on board slightly wounded, and carefully secured and tended with a view to subsequent presentation to the Zoological Gardens, a spot of blood on its wing would touch the tender heart of the stewardess, who would promptly knock it on the head to put it out of its misery, poor thing!

Captive fulmars committed marvellous suicides down the main hatch, or overboard; goslings of tender years, watched by our lady friends with all a mother's care, pined and died in ten minutes, and neither they nor any other of the naturalists' treasures ever came back to us any more in this world unless, as Chapman suggested, he recognised the flavour of his Richardson's skua in the daily loom soup.

Everything left about on board the *Pallas* seemed to find its way at once into the sailors' pickle-tub, and as many of our half-prepared specimens mysteriously disappeared from the den of the taxidermists, my sincere hope is that the good folk of Norway are capable of taking arsenical soap in their food without detriment to their constitutions.

II.

GREEN HARBOUR, ICE FIORD.

It was at midnight on the 26th of July that we cast our anchor in Green Harbour, Ice Fiord. In this tropical weather (Aug. 11th, 1884), when even the office boys of the City of London carry fans as they rush about in the neighbourhood of the Bank, the memory of that bright crisp night comes back with the freshness of iced soda-water. All round us were glaciers, the valleys in which we were told the reindeer found their food looking only like small brown streaks through that frozen land.

The harbour had several ships in it, whalers from Norway, which had put in on the chance of obtaining fresh meat. The sea was smooth as glass, weird lights played about the ice-fields, strange cries of unfamiliar birds broke the silence, and even the least enthusiastic of us acknowledged that we were indeed in wonderland. Every man who carried a gun wanted to go on shore, and our jagd-boats were full of passengers. As the parties had already been arranged there was little delay, and in less than a quarter of an hour three parties had left for the shore. The Germans got the start, but their ambition led them astray, for, ignoring the ordinary landing, they made for a point at the foot of some low cliffs, over and beyond which they fondly imagined lay some hunter's Eden, as yet undisturbed by the whalers. Their party consisted of a baron and his jäger, a gorgeous fellow in grey and green, with brass buttons, which made up a portrait gallery of all the beasts found in the ark; a capital fellow who was in the German navy; and a stout gentleman whose sporting ambition did not go well in double harness with his natural configuration. Poor fellow, he very soon found that his burly manhood was not meant to scale the cliffs of Spitzbergen, and he and his friends came back in time for the next meal on board ship, having utterly failed to penetrate beyond the first range of cliffs. Two other boats started after the Germans; ours the last of all. For our sins we had to follow in the track of the first boatload of Englishmen, who had wisely gone straight up the main valley. This valley ran nearly due east and west. Down its centre ran a shallow muddy stream, which rose in a glacier some twenty miles or so inland. To the right and left of us as we went, low hills rolled up from the river-bed, covered with short moss and poor grass. There was very little of such ground, however, for the bare moraines and steep cliffs natural to these regions rose almost at once from the river-bed, and on these nothing more nutritious than snow and ice appeared to exist.

In the mud of the river we found ample 'sign' of reindeer, and the mossy bog and little streams were full of their cast antlers, some of which were finer than any I have seen elsewhere. I counted forty-two points, great and small, on one pair which I believe to have belonged originally to the same beast, and which I found at no great distance apart. For a time I attempted to carry my treasure-trove, but the walk was a long one and the burden unwieldy to carry, so that I reluctantly left it behind in the end. Unfortunately all the 'sign' seemed old, and the frequent recent tracks of men rather damped our hopes. Some little corries running at right angles to the river tempted us to divide our party and explore them. After a good deal of stiff climbing Cocks and myself got to a point at which we had to admit ourselves beaten, the highest point reached affording us only a view of glaciers and snow-fields, with no other valley or green place visible, except the one we had left. A solitary Arctic fox had left his bones amongst these sterile heights, having probably met his death whilst attempting, like ourselves, to reach the breeding-place of the little auks. This chief colony of these little birds was in a bold cliff, perhaps nearly 1,500 or 2,000 feet high, rising abruptly from a ruinous waste of snow and ice and moraine. C—— and myself had probably been detected by the bird sentinels toiling up towards their heights, for the rush and clamour of the busy myriads as they swept out from their cliffs to inspect us, or sat muttering on their narrow ledges, was simply incessant. Finding that our corrie was a barren trap with no outlet to it, nor any game, we came back to the main valley, and rejoining our companions, began to march resolutely towards the glacier. Unfortunately, as we proceeded, four birds, whose flight proclaimed them grouse, came swinging down the valley to meet us, and alighting on a steep slope of moraine, with a low call like a red-grouse, ran a few yards and then sat watching us. By using all our eloquence the 'cockiologist' had up till that moment foregone all ornithological temptations; but this was too much for his resolution, and for half an hour we had the pleasure of watching our companion stalk these stupid cock ryper, who eventually let themselves be shot sitting. Our 'cockiologist' was well punished for his sins, however, by losing us; and when we at last found him sitting at the foot of the cliff, three moulting ryper at his feet, and a stale crust of bread which he had picked up in his hand, he looked the very beau ideal of hungry sorrow and despair. We forgave him and let him have some lunch, and still believe they libelled him who said that though he had both lunch and forgiveness at our hands, he was seen to secrete his old crust in his pocket, in case he should again fall into error, and be deserted.

We started from our ship at midnight, and though we had been walking fast ever since, the glacier which blocked the end of our valley seemed no nearer. It looked a mile or two off when we started—it looked about the same distance from us twelve hours afterwards.

The bright clearness of the atmosphere seems to affect everything in the Spitzbergen seas, spirits and appetite as well as sight. The sharp peaks stand out unsoftened by any atmospheric 'distance,' with all the hardness of a photograph. Luckily for us our spirits were high, and our hopes not easily dashed in spite of the never-ending valley. All was new to us, and in summer everything in these Arctic regions is beautiful. Where we walked along the little foot-hills by the river, a summer carpet of moss and gay little flowers had been spread out. Millions of tiny, star-like white blossoms were scattered amongst the rough grasses, and vied with the beautiful miniature poppies, some white and some canary-coloured, with velvety-green centres and white stamens, in adorning the river's edge. Far inland though we were, two or three skuas seemed still to be following us, poised on clean-cut wings high overhead. Four or five ivory gulls passed us later on in the afternoon, and on the mud by the river's edge the eider-fowl were busy. In front of us during the whole of our walk, with but little intermission, purple sandpipers ran and whistled in a strangely human key, pretending lameness or tameness, of which they were wholly innocent. Their nests were no doubt near us, but we were not lucky enough to find them, though others of our party subsequently secured specimens both of the eggs and the young of these birds. Amongst the boulders snow buntings, with the shape and sauciness of sparrows, kept twittering and flitting from point to point, pretty, cheery little fellows, who though no doubt they had large families somewhere near, seemed by no means depressed by the prospect of rearing so many young ones in so barren a land.

And now, as we were really nearing the glacier, shot after shot awoke the echoes. The early birds were getting their worms—*i.e.*, the first boatload of Englishmen were reaping the reward of their early start. A regular fusillade seemed to be going on about three miles ahead of us; so, thinking our chances spoilt in that direction, we again divided and tried some of the branches from the main valley. Chapman and myself found the best-looking valley I saw while in Spitzbergen, with pretty plateaux of really good pasturage; but not a head of game could we see, though we walked and worked as if we had only just started. At last, provisions failing, we turned homewards, and after an hour or so spent on the return march, heard a shot fired to our left, and shortly afterwards saw L—— and C—— doing all they could to transport a fine reindeer to our side the river. In spite of the cold water and weary trudge, we were not long in going to their assistance, and tramped home in company, carrying the buck between us. It was a four or five years old beast, with a very fair head still in the velvet, a long blue-grey coat, and an immense amount of fat. Our friends told us that they had already seen the first party retracing their steps to the ship, so we turned our faces resolutely homewards, and having already as much as we could carry, and very weary limbs, we resolved to hunt no more.

Late evening was upon us again, and of course, as we had resolved to shoot no more *en route*, we now saw several of the quaint forms of the reindeer feeding down from the remote heights, where they had been resting, to the river-edge. One would almost fancy that the rein knew how short a time of plenty was before them, and how long a fast, for with outstretched necks they hurry from point to point, cropping here a mouthful and there a mouthful, and literally feeding at a run. But if life is hard for them in the winter, how much harder must it be for the grouse, who winter with them! All other birds have fled when darkness and bitter cold settle on the shores of Spitzbergen. Gulls and guillemots, thieving skuas and broad-winged burgomasters, have sought more genial climes; but the Spitzbergen ryper, so says the naturalist, stays at home and hibernates. Why he should do so seems a mystery, unless it is to provide an occasional meal for a starving Arctic fox, for surely Norway is well within reach of his powerful wings, and there seems no reason why he should be more ignorant of geography than his other winged fellow-countrymen.

Those were long miles between us and our dinners on the evening of the 27th July, and none of those who shared in our first tramp of twenty-three hours in Ice Fiord, are likely to forget it. The worst part of the journey was that the goal looked so temptingly near, yet never seemed to grow nearer. Anyone would have bet that an hour's walk at most would have taken us to the boat, and yet in thrice that time we had apparently come no nearer. Small wonder, we thought, that the old navigator who had sighted Spitzbergen first — long, long ago—after sailing towards it for two days, turned back from a land which he believed receded as he approached it. For us to walk the distance in the morning full of hope, constantly on the *qui vive* for game, was one thing; to return empty-handed, or rather carrying another man's game, was quite another thing. The walking, too, in Ice Fiord we found, though varied in nature, all equally bad. You might climb along a steep slope, where the moraine glided away from under your feet and robbed you of half the length of your stride; lower down you might flounder through bogs of springy moss replete with dark mud-holes, in which from time to time, however careful, you were bound to stick; or if you liked neither of these roads, the slimy ooze by the river's brim offered you a third alternative of evils.

It was past eleven at night before we reached the steamer, having done twenty-three hours of as hard work as men out of training need wish for. The other fellows had, if anything, a harder time of it. They had gone very far before they found game, and then one only of their number secured a deer after several shots. It was a young beast with a poor head; but the successful sportsman was not hard to please, so that he turned home at once, leaving his keener comrades to continue the chase without him. The two men left behind, F—— and Mac, had a very long tramp before they again sighted game, but in the end they were rewarded by finding two stags in one direction, and a small mixed herd in another. F—— took the two stags and Mac the herd, in which he had made out with his glasses one magnificent fellow with a head well worth working for.

And now the difficulties of shooting together over a limited area became painfully apparent. Poor Mac, a keen, careful stalker, was just beginning to feel happy, only a little easy ground intervening between him and his prey, when the crack of F——'s rifle rang through the valley. Of course, up went the heads of the herd, and Mac had the pleasure of watching them depart. F—— bagged both his stags, and Mac, with the pertinacity of a

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sleuth-hound, recommenced his stalk. It was a long business, and he had not mended matters by sliding down a hill and damaging one of his knees, which was still in bandages from an old hurt. But in time he got close to the herd again—close, alas! to all except the big stag, who, after the manner of big beasts, insisted on keeping the herd well between himself and his enemy.

When at last Mac fired, the herd, which up till then had been quietly regarding him, uncertain what he might be, took to flight, followed at a distance by the wounded stag.

To cut a long story short, the big head got away to die unseen, while Mac, quite played out by this time, turned towards home. When the two sportsmen got back to the ship they had been walking some twenty-three to twenty-four hours, during which time they had only one meal. Mac's white worn-out face told plainly what a tough trial the walk home, with an injured knee, had been to him, though F—— had good-naturedly carried both rifles most of the way. Successful and unlucky sportsmen alike had some reward in store at the end of their long day, for the ladies in our absence had devoted themselves to the preparation of what they were pleased to term a really English dinner ; that is to say, we had no loom soup and no Norwegian cheese, but in place thereof real roast meat (reindeer), and an attempt at a plum-pudding.

Reindeer venison in season, fed in Spitzbergen, and submitted to a Spitzbergen appetite, is as good as any venison I ever tasted.

In our absence the rest of our party had been ashore birdsnesting and collecting curiosities. Amongst other strange relics, one of the ladies had a human jaw, which she had brought away under the belief that it belonged to a reindeer or some other four-footed beast. Poor lady, she undertook a weary pilgrimage at the first opportunity to restore the relic to its original resting-place, as a penance for her ignorance in matters anatomical. I suppose the graves near which the jaw-bone was found must have been those of some ill-fated Russian fishermen who had tried to winter in Spitzbergen years ago, and yielded, as so many of them did, to scurvy, and the rigours of a prolonged Arctic winter.

III.

AXEL BAY.

After our reindeer-hunt in Ice Fiord, we got up steam and ran along the coast for the benefit of those who cared more for scenery than shooting. King's Bay and Cross Bay rewarded us with magnificent glimpses of glaciers of enormous size and pure bright colours, and cliffs whose rocky faces were dyed with hues so vivid that any artist would be disbelieved who painted them as they are. From time to time we landed, but as there were no valleys we saw no game, and could find no way into the interior. Wherever the face of the cliffs was free from ice and snow, the rocky ridges were lined with guillemots squatting upon their eggs. As we steamed along under these cliffs the view we had of bird-life beggars description. Mr. Chapman, one of my companions, a keen out-of-door naturalist, describes what we saw better than I could: 'The teeming, hurrying, clamorous throng of sea-fowl eddied round the lofty summits, dwarfed by the altitude to mere specks, till they looked like ten thousand swarms of bees. Ceaselessly, day and night, the multitudinous columns plied between crag and sea, the upward-bound file with gaping bill and a cheekful of shrimps, intended for their young, but often destined to become the prey of the Arctic skuas, who ever hovered overhead on piracy intent. The wild Babel-like medley of cries from the myriad throats round these cliffs, ceaselessly resounding in different cadences, resembled the distant roar of a heavy sea, or, better perhaps, of an excited mob of the *ignobile vulgus* at election-times. The buzzing and chattering of the guillemots, the weird long-drawn "twir" of the auks, and the peculiar "yapping" bark of numberless Arctic foxes, each formed a part of this strange northern chorus.'

Unfortunately for the naturalists, the loomeries were, as far as we were concerned, inaccessible, a misfortune which they bore pretty patiently, until they discovered that in one of the cliffs a small colony of those beautiful foul feeders, the ivory gulls, had their nests.

On the shore (I think it was in Magdalena Bay) we all of us procured specimens of the ivory gull, thanks to the remains of white whales left on the beach there. Beautiful and cleanly as the ivory gull looks, it is as foul a feeder as the vulture, and, like other carrion birds, seems to be guided by instinct to the carcase as soon as the hunter has killed a beast.

All round the vessel as we lay at anchor, the sea was covered with what, to the unscientific eye, looked like shoals of small black tadpoles, said by those who knew to be 'whales'-food.' We noticed, too, large numbers of jelly-fish floating about at a considerable distance below the surface, some of them looking large enough to fill an ordinary stable-bucket, and marked with broad bold rings of violet colour.

In Bel Sound a quaint sight was presented to us by a small Norwegian schooner, lying at anchor, surrounded by a huge halo composed of the carcases of white whales which her crew had killed during a stay of less than two months in these waters. Some of our party boarded the schooner, one of them foolishly in slippers, and he at least had cause to regret having done so. The decks of the *Hvitfisken* were half an inch deep in oil, and the unfortunate slippers were soon saturated in the malodorous fluid, and eventually consigned to the deep. The white whales floating round the vessel had been appropriated by a throng of fulmar petrels as their feeding-grounds, and on these, within a few feet of the schooner's decks, the audacious birds quarrelled over their food, as careless of our presence as barn-door fowls. One of the crew of the whaler caught as many fulmars for us as we wanted, with a line and hook, the birds taking the bait greedily.

In from six to seven weeks this schooner had obtained upwards of 250 white whales, a couple of polar bears, fourteen reindeer, a number of seals, a quantity of eider-down, eggs, fowl, etc., a bag roughly estimated by the captain to be worth about £1,500. To get really good sport round Spitzbergen, it seemed to us that we should have been earlier in the field; as bears, at any rate, are not likely to be met with except by the first summer visitants of any given locality. The reindeer, too, are driven a long way inland by the hungry whalers, though even then they don't seem to become even reasonably shy, or difficult to stalk. That they will stand sometimes for a couple of shots is not what I allude to—that, I take it, arising simply from the fact that they mistake the rifle's report for the cracking of ice in the glaciers near which they live. In the same way I have seen mountain game in Asia very little disturbed by rifle-shots, so long as they neither saw nor got the wind of the shooter. But the Spitzbergen reindeer did not seem to recognise man as an animal to be avoided until they got his wind.

After returning from our first stalk in Ice Fiord, we all of us snatched a few hours' rest; but before midday on the following morning we were in the boats again.

During our short slumber the steamer had reached the neighbourhood of Axel Sound, which was then full of masses of detached bay ice drifting slowly seaward. Amongst this drifting ice our harpooners led us to expect good sport. Two boats left the ship, the one in which I found myself being captained by the harpooner Kjeldsen, a terribly broad-chested, stalwart specimen of a Norwegian sailor.

My friends the naturalists were with me, and one other Englishman. For some time the only living things we saw were the birds which swept round us in dense clouds, or stood in serried upright ranks upon the ice. Once amongst the detached floes, our sailors progressed as much upon the ice as in their boat. One leg seemed always to be over the gunwale, ready to be used as an extempore punting-pole; while from time to time the owner of it would step lightly out of the boat on to a little detached berg and step along from one unsteady little floating ice island to another, as unconcernedly as if he was going over stepping-stones in a six-inch-deep rivulet at home. They never seemed to make a mistake, even to the extent of wetting their feet.

The morning was exceptionally bright, and the sun gleamed hotly on the ice. Once or twice we saw a big round head looking steadily at us from a distance in the open water, but it always vanished before we could shoot. Later on Kjeldsen made out a seal asleep on a fair-sized berg some distance away from us. The boat crept through the water without a sound. Long practice had taught our men to move more silently through the drifting ice than others could have done through open water. Kjeldsen advised us not to approach too closely, as the seals had been much hunted lately, and our only chance would be a long shot which would kill the beast before he woke. My friends gave me the shot, so creeping into the bow of the boat, I waited until we were about a hundred yards from the still sleeping seal, who glistened with sun and sea-water like frosted silver. The berg on which he lay, with his head directly towards me, kept rising and falling with the motion of the sea, as did also my boat. Of course this element of motion was against the accuracy of one's aim, but when luck is with the sportsman, such trifling odds make no difference to the result. Two other shots followed mine in quick succession, and we saw them splash and skip beyond the berg where the seal lay; but he never moved, the first shot having effectually scattered his still sleeping brains.

After securing our seal, we landed on one of the islands in the sound to catch, if possible, some young pink-footed geese. A gosling would seem unlikely to run away from a young and active Briton, but I regret to state that these goslings did so, topping a rise with wonderful alacrity, and then disappearing as if by magic. On a subsequent occasion gosling-hunters were more successful, landing at night at a kind of nursery for young geese, and kidnapping several of them.

Anything more desolate and barren than the islands in Bel Sound cannot by any chance exist on earth. The surface of them, for the most part, is bare dark rock, belonging to the carboniferous class, the strata upturned in such a way as to render walking over the island difficult and painful. The rocks are full of fossils, of which we collected many, as well as a few nodules of ironstone. Of coal and iron we saw traces while in Spitzbergen, but the wonderful golden sand which the Danish captain found in the seventeenth century escaped our notice, as it has everyone else's, since the analyst of Copenhagen discovered that the little bottleful of sand in the museum really did contain a considerable quantity of pure gold.

It is strange, if the two stories of the Copenhagen golden sand and the gold found in the pebbles brought home by Martin Frobisher's seaman be true, that nothing more has been heard of Spitzbergen as a gold-field since the seventeenth century, seeing how many men visit its shores yearly.

The island on which our party landed had evidently been a resort of the whalers in the old whaling days, before their huge prey deserted the waters of Spitzbergen. All over the island we found immense bones of *Balæna mysticetus*, in places partially overgrown by moss; in others adding their ghastly whiteness to the desolation of the scene. At one end of the island there was a very interesting series of breeding establishments. Nearest to the water, in rows amongst the coarse grass and sand, mother eider-ducks were sitting upon eggs, and keeping a jealous eye on the marauding skuas. If for a moment the unfortunate mother had occasion to leave her nest, she was obliged to cover up her treasures in down to hide them from her enemies' eyes. What had become of her handsome mate I don't know, but, like a wise bird, he evidently lived some distance from the nursery. I don't think we saw a drake on the island. Our men shot a good many of the eider-fowl for the salting-tubs, and having killed the mothers of the family, carried off a sackful of eggs and down from the deserted nests. It was the only unsportsmanlike thing I saw the Norwegians do; their hatred of killing anything except for use, and their desire to make the most of all they do kill being beyond all praise.

Higher up than the nesting-place of the eider-fowl some Arctic terns had formed a colony, and a very pretty belligerent little colony it was. Neither man nor skua did these graceful little birds seem to fear, for let either one or the other come within the precincts of their domain, and with shrill cries and swift wings they whirled round the intruder, stooping from above till they almost struck him with their wings. Indeed, a skua got such a harrying from them that he sought our society for protection, and owed a broken wing and captivity to his misplaced confidence. The skuas themselves are as interesting as parents as they are in their ordinary rôle of pirates. No bird, not even the lapwing, nor a professional London beggar, is so apt at aping complaints which he does not suffer from, as a skua when any stranger comes near her nest.

When we had investigated everything of interest upon the island, we went down to the northern shore to see if, owing to the slackening of the tide, there was yet any chance of our being able to get through the narrows at the back of Axel Island. From the shore we saw, perhaps, the finest sight we looked on during our whole cruise in Arctic waters. Across the narrows, forming the opposite shore to that on which we stood, was an enormous glacier, the face of which had been so split as to reveal on the surface all the various ice strata of which it was composed. The corner of the glacier and some forbidding black rocks advanced so far into the channel as nearly to block the way out. Through this narrow channel the tide was sweeping, carrying with it huge masses of ice, exhibiting all manner of beautiful prismatic colours, grinding against each other, struggling, roaring, and fighting with each other like a human crowd at the door of a burning theatre. At one moment the bergs would climb over one another until, piled block upon block, a great barrier of ice rose right across the gut, and then with a roar the whole would subside again into the angry waters. There was no chance of getting through such a sea in safety, so we turned back to lunch.

Our artist and ornithologist, who came from the canny North country, had taken a view of the impressive scene just described from another point of vantage, in dangerous proximity to the luncheon-baskets, and spent a quarter of an hour to his entire satisfaction in describing to us the scientific reasons for the unfortunate explosion and evaporation of two bottles of Bass during the last quarter of an hour. Without venturing to doubt the accuracy of statements advanced by such an eminent authority, we thought it a little curious that a German sausage and half a chicken should also have 'evaporated,' thanks to the rarefied atmosphere of these high northern latitudes. Before admiring any more scenery we saw to the 'evaporation' of the other contents of our hamper in person.

Although unable to reach the shore of Van Mijen's Bay that evening, owing to the strong tide and a fringe of ice which extended several miles from the shore, our time was not wasted, as one of our naturalists had the pleasure of adding a new name to the list of birds found in Spitzbergen. This was a whimbrel, or rather the corpse of a whimbrel, very much the worse for wear, but still sufficiently preserved to be easily recognisable. The same gentleman, Mr. Heneage Cocks, killed another bird new to Spitzbergen, the common turnstone; but whether this was on Axel Island or Ice Fiord, I forget. The enthusiasm of our naturalists did us all good, making us take a keener interest in all we saw, and affording amusement when big game was unattainable. On the way back to the steamer we passed through a shoal of white whales, plunging along at a very rapid rate in the shallow water near the shore. They seemed quick movers in the water, and perhaps it was owing to this, and the somewhat lumpy state of the sea round us, that all our bullets went astray.

The other 'fangst-baad' (hunting-boat) came in some time in the middle of the night or morning, it is difficult to remember which, since during the three days and nights we spent in Spitzbergen the present writer only slept once, after the first reindeer-hunt, on board the steamer, and day and night got hopelessly confused. Mac and his companion had done very well, having obtained three seals and lost others which, though killed, had sunk before the harpoon could be got into them. Kjeldsen used to recommend a shot-gun and a charge of heavy shot as being better than a rifle. A seal killed outright with a rifle-ball sinks at once, if in open water; but a charge of shot often leaves the dying beast struggling blindly on the water until a boat has time to get alongside.

It was about 3 a.m. on the 29th July that we passed Danes Island, and attained our most northerly point off Vogelsang, latitude 79° 55′. Most of us were down below, rolled up in our sheets on the narrow shelves on which we put our wearied limbs away to rest. Some of the sportsmen were still on deck, anxiously waiting for a pause somewhere that they might again sally forth in the boats on the hunt. Suddenly a rumour spread through the ship that the North Pole was in sight, and Elling Carlsen or Miss K—— (reports varied) had been sent off to nail the Union Jack to the top of it. Immediately all was confusion. The deck was crowded. New fashions prevailed, or was it that for the time even clothes were almost forgotten? Loose dressing-gowns and curl-papers appeared on forms that even the most malicious fancy had never pictured in anything but the smartest of frocks and most naturally waving tresses. The German jäger appeared without his buttons, and oh! 'sorrow's crown of sorrows,' the Scotch gentleman, whose 'understandings' had been for days our secret marvel and envy, appeared without his calves. An ardent photographer in an ulster and a night-cap was imploring the captain to keep his vessel steady, if only for one moment; and round and above the noisy and ridiculous group the northern heavens shed such cold bright rays of pure prismatic colours as no fancy ever painted, no jewel ever displayed. The depth of the colours and their strange brilliance as they were caught up, varied and repeated by sky and sea and iceberg, had no parallel in nature. No colours could copy those wonderful effects of northern light, no pen describe the solemn grandeur of what is to the whole world the threshold of the unknown.

The night was perfectly calm and clear, and still with a stillness that only exists in the Arctic regions. From the masthead we could see the vast plain of Polar ice, here and there rising into lines of little cliffs, made of piled hummocks, barring our farther progress north. The whole mass of ice was slowly floating south, so our ice-master told us, but this was not discernible from where we stood. Some of my comrades said they observed a few birds and a seal or two. I confess they escaped my notice. My own impression was that, save for a little whaler which hung on the very edge of the pack a little to the north of us, we were alone with the advance-guard of the Polar pack.

Wild as the ice scene was, the only land in sight was no less defiantly stern. The sharp black outlines of Vogelsang's forbidding headland, and the spotless white of her great glaciers were faithfully mirrored in a motionless sea. No wonder that the frozen north, in spite of all its horrors, its histories of gallant lives lost, and heroes wasted, has so much attraction still for explorers and sportsmen. There is a mystery and a majesty about the Arctic regions which no other lands possess. I see some of our daily papers make light of the fact that England can no longer boast that her flag is to the front in the race to the Pole, and one handler of a bitter pen volunteers the statement, that even if he could be certain of reaching that goal of so many men's ambition, nothing would tempt him to try. Nobody, probably, ever expected anything else of him. But because there is no chance of making money out of the Polar regions, that is no reason why Englishmen should not continue to struggle for pre-eminence in a region which has long been the world's arena for contests of naval courage, endurance, and seamanship.

But even the majesty of night on the threshold of the unknown cannot long restrain some wild irreverent spirits, and after a short spell of silence our contractor and some others of his kidney burst forth with an explosion of squibs, crackers, cheers, and other abominations; after which the steamer's two tiny cannons popped off a feeble salute to the Ice King, whose realms we had approached, and then we set our heads south again.

Lightly clad though many of us were on the steamer's deck that night, none of us complained of cold; indeed, if all summers in Spitzbergen are as warm as the summer of 1881 was, there is no reason why future summer visitants to that island should prepare themselves for their trip by any purchase of additional raiment.

One of my companions has given me some printed notes of his, taken during our trip, in which I find he states that the thermometer hung on the deck-house registered while we were in Magdalena Bay over 80° in the sun. Moreover, on that day, a host of small midges, the only insects seen in Spitzbergen, were observed on deck. The same authority gives the surface-temperature of the water off Vogelsang Island as 32°. Every morning we noticed a thin coating of ice round the ship, if it had been stationary for any length of time; but so crisp and dry is the cold that the story told of Martin Frobisher's Esquimaux seemed easy of credence. This unhappy savage (so the story goes), after having been reared in the north of Greenland, domiciled all his days in huts built of blocks of ice, and inured since childhood to the intense cold of Arctic winters, was brought against his will to merry England, caught a cold in our genial climate during his first month on shore, and died of it.

IV.

VAN MIJEN'S BAY.

AND now for the first time, as we steamed back to Bel Sound, a rumour got about that one small party amongst us was anxious to abridge our stay in Spitzbergen, and to spend the rest of our time in the Norwegian fiords. Worse than this, the contractor had found that if we stayed the length of time originally agreed upon, he would be the loser by the whole transaction. So we were to be robbed of more than half our time in the Arctic Sea, and taken back against our will. We scarcely gave credence to these evil reports, but they made us doubly anxious to be up and doing all day and all night.

Arrived at Bel Sound, L—— and myself got the harpooner Johannessen and some of the sailors to man the big hunting-boat to make a second attempt to land in Van Mijen's Bay. When we started we were somewhat short of hands, and all of us very tired. We had, the men said, sixteen miles to row in an awkward lumpy sea, snow falling freely, and a strong wind at first in our teeth. However, we all lent a hand, sitting face to face, each pair of oars worked by two pairs of hands—one pair pulling while the other pair pushed in time. After a while L—— gave up the pulling to try to snatch a little sleep, that he might be fit for work when we landed. Another of the sailors borrowed an old sheepskin shouba of mine, which has kept out many a bitter steppe wind in Russia, and rolling himself in it took a long forty winks. When his comrade thought he had had as much sleep as was good for him he woke the first sleeper, and inducted himself into my shouba. Meanwhile Johannessen and myself, with the others, toiled steadily at the oar, and though the pace was slow our pertinacity was at last rewarded by our getting safely round to the back of Axel Island. Here we got the wind well behind us, and taking in our oars, put up the sail, and ran before the wind at a pace which was delightful after our late experience. The wind was almost too much for us, and it remained a question whether we should not take in the sail altogether, when something occurred which nearly stopped our voyage for ever. With a heavy thud that woke the sleepers in a moment, our little boat ran on to a submerged berg, which was lying just under water. There was no reason to expect ice there, as the shore ice was some distance off, and no other detached pieces were visible. Still there we were, well out in deep water, lying on our side, stuck hard and fast on an invisible iceberg. The water lapped in over the gunwale, and some of the fellows looked very scared; the wind wrenched and tore at the sail, and whilst leaning over the opposite side of the boat to try to right her, I was beginning to wonder whether in this strange atmosphere Axel Island might not appear to be much nearer than a swimmer would actually find it to be. My own first thought was to get down the sail. Luckily I left the execution of my idea to Johannessen, who was perfectly cool all the time; and as he didn't interfere with the sail, after two or three angry tugs we felt a delightful sliding motion under us, the boat righted again, and we realized that the wind had carried us clean over the impediment. We slept no more after that, but kept a very careful look-out for icebergs. As we neared the fast ice by the coast we saw several seals asleep, far away from the seaward edge of the ice, and for some anxious minutes we believed we saw a bear. He was a long way off on the ice, sitting up and watching us, if it was one; but after a careful scrutiny the men decided that it was only a hummock of ice, and persuaded my companion into the same belief.

I may wrong him, but I have always

thought that had our crew been less tired, or had the object lain more in the direction of home, Johannessen would have made a closer inspection before deciding against my bear. However, bear or no bear, I don't think we could ever have got through the ice to within shot of it, even if we had tried. Before landing in the bay we had a quarter of an hour's difficult work in forcing our way up narrow lanes through the fast ice that still clung to the shore, and our harpooner seemed a little nervous about our chances of having an open sea to get away in on our return. All lending a hand, we soon ran the boat high up on the beach, took a handful of lunch apiece, and then secured the remainder of our stores against any casual visit from Arctic foxes. The feeding-grounds in Van Mijen Bay were the best we saw in Spitzbergen, consisting of a series of considerable valleys, whose yellow carpeting of moss contrasted strongly with the snow on the hills, and the bright purity of the hummocky ice in the bay. The valleys run together in the bay, and terminate in a broad flat of mud and moss, some miles across, on which the Norwegians told me large herds of reindeer were seen all through the summer. As the ice had only just left the bay, we thought it a little hard that no herds of reindeer occupied their favourite haunts at the moment of our advent.

But the first mud flat we came to explained their absence. Across and across the mud scores of deer-tracks ran, but unfortunately of the same date, as the most recent of them were the two broad tracks which belonged to Gamle Becke, a Norwegian hunter, who in a little open boat follows the first whalers to these shores every summer, hangs about each bay until the ice leaves it, and deservedly gets the pick of all the shooting within it. He is an old man, so they say, but he comes alone, and though he is glad now and then to be taken in tow by a bigger vessel, he has no fear of the Northern seas, and carries on his crusade against the reindeer unaided. The deer he kills he sells to whalers who want fresh meat and have no time to go in search of it themselves, or he salts and carries it back to Norway, for sale there.

I have often thought that I should like to go for a cruise with this old hunter, and if only I spoke Norse, nothing but his having ceased to exist should prevent me. Just think, reader, if the man would talk, how much thrilling narrative of a life spent amongst the ice a little whisky and tobacco might elicit from him over the camp fire! Even Hudson, with his half-decked boat, crew of ten men and a boy, and simple sailing orders, dated A.D. 1607, was commander of quite a well-fitted vessel compared to that in which 'Old Man Becke' goes yachting to the Arctic seas. However, Old Man Becke was a nuisance to us on this particular occasion, for he had driven all the deer inland; and worse still, had taken himself off somewhere without affording us the pleasure of an interview.

The whole party, Johannessen, sailors, L——

and myself, started at once up the main valley, separating after we had gone some three or four miles. It was not long before I made out a couple of grey streaks moving across the horizon in front of me, and half an hour spent in creeping amongst the water-courses and hollows of the plain brought me nearly within range of a couple of reindeer, which up till then had been feeding, after their custom, at a run in my direction. Unfortunately for me they elected to change their line of pasture, and for another half-hour I had a stern chase after them, and thanks to the rapidity with which they browsed from point to point, and the unfavourable nature of the ground for stalking, at the end of that time I was no nearer than when I started. Annoyed by my unavailing endeavours I came out more into the open, following the beasts with more speed than discretion, the result of which was that they speedily saw me and made for the river-bed at a run. A long shot, however, at the nearest put us again on more even terms, and after nearly an hour spent in pursuing my wounded beast, who kept falling from time to time, I drove him right up to my friend L——, who gave him his *coup de grace.* Whilst performing the last rites for my victim, one of the men gave a low whistle, and looking up we saw the companion of my reindeer coming at a trot along his ill-fated fellow's trail. Luckily, the wind was right for us, and I had nowhere crossed my beast's footsteps, so that the second stag trotted up almost to the side of the first, and speedily shared his fate.

Leaving the men to take care of the venison, L—— and myself again proceeded up the valley, and in a short time I made out three really good beasts feeding down from the hills to the river's edge. A very careful stalk and half an hour spent in patient waiting would indubitably have been rewarded by at least one good head, but to my horror I suddenly saw L—— advancing from another direction, evidently in total ignorance both of my whereabouts and the proximity of game. To warn him was impossible, so I had to take a long shot and hope for the best. Though I could see my stag's head as plainly as if he had been only a hundred yards off, I allowed considerably for the deceptive nature of distances in these regions, and in spite of my precautions had the mortification of seeing my ball fall far short of its mark. My shot attracted L——'s notice, and he and Johannessen managed to bag two out of the three deer. The big head fell to the harpooner, and as it was by far the best obtained by any of us during our trip, he very naturally cut it off and threw it away, when no one was looking, to save portage.

After this I determined to go off on my own line, and accordingly departed up a very promising-looking gorge, in which I found absolutely nothing until I was some distance on my way home again. Then a big grey boulder caught my eye, and as it seemed to me a new feature in the landscape, I scrutinized it carefully. As it did not move and did not look much like a stag, I walked carelessly forward till within about four hundred yards, when the boulder arose, and taking upon itself the form of a 'rein,' bolted as hard as it could lay legs to the ground. As he rose, I dropped to the ground and lay still. After going for some time as if the demon hunter was behind him, the stag stopped, and for full ten minutes stood staring in my direction. Then he began to feed. In another ten minutes he lifted his head, had another look at me (still lying in my grey coat, still as a stone, amongst the moss), and then began to graze slowly in my direction; and thus, with frequent halts, he slowly returned to the spot from which I had roused him, whence he trotted briskly towards me until within forty yards of where I lay. To rise and fire as he bounded away was the work of a moment, and he dropped like a rabbit in his tracks. I verily believe that had I remained quite still he would almost have put his nose against me before his curiosity would have been satisfied. No doubt the wind and the lucky colour of my coat helped to deceive him; but I fancy most men would agree that such behaviour smacks a little too much of the familiarity of the domestic cow, to make the chase of reindeer very interesting.

Having skinned my beast and packed the principal joints in the skin, I shouldered my pack and trudged back to the boat, where in place of the 'bravos' I expected for my success, and libations of bottled beer, I was met with a torrent of abuse for leaving so much good meat behind. A Norwegian fisherman is a good sportsman and good fellow, but he is also a very masterful gilly, and *nolens volens* I had to go back and bring home the rest of the meat before I got anything to drink. It seemed rather hard at 8.30 p.m., having toiled since 6 a.m., to be obliged to act as a venison-porter during the rest of the night; but it was no good remonstrating, so I went back and brought in the rest of my carcase, while the sailors and my chum brought home the other four deer. Meanwhile the wind had dropped, so that it was not until breakfast-time next day that ourselves and our five reindeer found their way on board the *Pallas*. Ours was, I believe, the best bag made during the trip, but unfortunately none of the heads were worth keeping. This was all the more annoying as the cast antlers found in Van Mijen's Bay seemed considerably larger than those found in other parts of the country. Long after midnight Johannessen, L——, and myself plodded wearily along with our deer upon our shoulders, relieving one another from time to time, as a reindeer, even fastened on the shoulders in the ingenious way in which Norwegians fasten one, is too heavy a weight for any man to carry far. And yet, when all our porter's work had been done, and the sixteen miles row without a breath of wind had been accomplished, neither L—— nor myself turned in for our well-earned sleep. Whilst we dined our steamer moved out from Bel

Sound, and in what seemed to us a very few hours we were again in Ice Fiord, and preparing for what we were told was to be our last chance on shore.

This time Mac, L—— and myself tried the same ground over which we had first shot a few days previously, and by a great effort got far beyond the farthest point reached by any of our party on the previous occasion. Not a single head of game was seen by any of the party on this second occasion until we were well past the glacier, when a herd of several deer was seen. A long stalk resulted unsuccessfully, the herd going over what looked to us like the backbone of the island at this point.

We stuck to our work, however, until we had ascended a high ridge, from the top of which a considerable stream flowed in exactly the opposite direction to that which we had now followed, apparently to its source. Far away below us a still larger valley than that in which we had been hitherto shooting stretched away, as far as we could judge, to the sea; and by the help of our glasses we could distinguish a number of deer feeding here and there in the distance. It looked as if we had reached a point from which we could see into the promised land; but, like the great Israelite of old, we could only look from our height and long, being physically incapable of proceeding another step onwards. Not only were our provisions almost finished, but we were half afraid lest the steamer should leave us behind; and moreover, poor human nature was about played out.

For three days and nights we had been in almost perpetual motion, taking little if any sleep during the whole period. Nothing but the feeling that we were hunting for a very limited time in a land we should never probably see again, aided by the vigour imparted to us by the gloriously bracing Northern climate, would have enabled us to endure as long as we had already done. Round us was a stony waste, perfectly innocent of even the most scanty vegetation, in spite of which we found here a covey of young ryper and their parents, the young birds so young as to be unable to rise. We tried to catch some of them for our naturalists, but though they could not fly they managed to elude us among the boulders. Seeing that we had penetrated beyond what we believed to be the ordinary limits of inland expeditions, we set to work to build a cairn recording our visit; but I regret to state that in this labour I took very little part, as having carried one large stone to the pile, I sat down, and went to sleep with my burden still in my arms. Mac and L——, having both been wiser than myself in snatching a little sleep on board when they could, had pity on my exhausted state, and refrained from disturbing my slumbers for awhile.

I could not recall the walk back if I would. I think I must have been almost asleep as I walked, and both my companions were in very nearly the same condition. However, we woke up with a vengeance when we regained our ship. Two or three others came on board soon after us, and then, having taken in a crew of whalers whose ship had got nipped in the ice, our skipper announced that he was going back to Norway.

The indignation meeting in the bachelors' saloon was the angriest meeting I ever assisted at. Certain wild spirits proposed seriously that Herr C——, our contractor, at whose hands we were suffering the treatment we complained of, should be pitched overboard, or at least ducked in the icy waters he was compelling us to leave. Our agreement had been for seventeen days to be spent in Spitzbergen seas. We had barely had a week of our promised sojourn. The minimum of time promised in the original circulars sent to us in England was fourteen days, and an additional three days had been agreed upon as compensation for our delays on the coast of Norway, endured by us to enable Herr C—— to load and land certain freight which he had taken in, to help to pay the expenses of his trip.

Now, without a word of apology or explanation, our stay was unceremoniously curtailed. The only reason alleged was that the expedition had turned out to be more costly than the originator of it had anticipated. The captain (as much in C——'s hands as we were) begged for an extension of our time. All possible persuasion and argument were expended in vain. Gallant old Elling Carlsen was bitterly wroth, and cursed his luck for ever taking part in an expedition of which he was not the chief. But Herr C—— was a specimen of a class, I believe, rare in Norway—the class of utterly unscrupulous swindlers. Our money had all been paid, and his word pledged to us was an easy thing to break. Since we had started, all the promises made for him by his agent in England, C—— had quietly and completely ignored. The expense of the expedition, advertised at £20 per head, had more than doubled since we started; but for the sake of the sport there had been very little grumbling, and this was the end!

A deputation, of which I was unfortunately the spokesman, waited on C—— on deck, and as we could get no redress or apology, I expressed somewhat freely to him, before his crew and friends, the opinion he compelled us to form of him. For this I subsequently was threatened with imprisonment in Norway —a threat which, of course, came to nothing.

Arrived in Norway, the luggage of one of our number—a particularly peaceable gentleman of the legal persuasion—was for some reason detained, until the English Consul interfered and compelled its delivery to its owner.

At Trondjhem I was told that I should be forcibly detained if I attempted to leave the ship; but as I had had enough of Mr. C—— and his friends, I sent my wife and luggage ashore, and then leisurely took my own departure. There was a good deal of 'tall talk' expended, but my companions looked uncomfortably likely to lend a vigorous assistance if I should prove unable to get away unaided, so that eventually I left the ship as peaceably as any other passenger. Some of us, aided by a companion who spoke Norwegian fluently, tried to obtain legal redress for our wrongs, and made our wail at length in the Norwegian papers. But our lawyer had no comfort to give us. C—— was a man of straw, he said. A lawsuit would entail great expense and a long delay in Norway, and C——'s happy impecuniosity put him beyond the reach of punishment. So we put our sorrows in our pockets, where at least two-thirds of the money the expedition had cost us ought still to have been, and went home wiser if sadder men. Since then the gentleman who acted as C——'s agent has forwarded me all the correspondence between himself and his principal, which I am glad to say frees *him* from all blame in the matter. Indeed, he shared our fate, never getting anything for his trouble in arranging the expedition, or a single halfpenny of his expenses refunded. Since then I hear C—— has migrated to America, where he may possibly turn up again as the organizer of a gigantic hunting expedition in the Rocky Mountains.

Our return to Norway was celebrated by a grand display of all the fireworks that remained to us, in the course of which our luckless ship's carpenter had his hand blown off. I have been obliged to tell of one Norwegian's dishonesty against the grain, for no one can admire the sturdy manly men of this race more than the present writer. Let me make amends by another anecdote. I think it was at Trondjhem that one of our party on the way north took a boat for the shore, and by mistake paid the boatman a sovereign for a shilling. The Englishman never discovered his mistake, but on the homeward voyage this honest waterman sought out his former fare, and refunded to him the money paid in mistake.

Taken altogether, our voyage home was more eventful than our voyage out. A fog that caught us between Spitzbergen and Norway very nearly brought us to grief, so much so indeed that we got 150 miles out of our course; nor did we feel less thankful for our escape from worse dangers when we saw the remains of a fine steamer which had gone ashore at North Cape. The day after the fog cleared off, when towards evening we were somewhere between North Cape and Tromsö, we were lucky enough to see a really beautiful mirage, two vessels on the horizon being reproduced bottom upwards in the sky. Both the ships were very much exaggerated in size in the reproduction, but their outlines were wonderfully distinct and perfect, while beyond and round them we could see what looked like a heavy surf rolling in on some invisible shore.

Having been now at sea for some considerable time, all of us, even to the most timid amongst the ladies, had begun to consider ourselves seasoned sailors, ensured against all attacks of sea-sickness. But the North Sea had an unpleasant surprise in store for us. The steamer in which we went home was small and malodorous. A lot of emigrants, making their way to Liverpool *en route* for the United States, filled every available corner; whilst amongst the passengers I made the acquaintance of a professional gentleman whose calling I can confidently recommend to any of my readers troubled with squeamish palates. He was a cod-liver oil taster, and could tell to a nicety whether an oil was made from the livers of blind sharks, dog-fish, or, as perhaps more rarely happens, genuine cod. He told us what he drank daily when on duty, but I have forgotten. A companion says the amount was something in quarts, but I fear this is an exaggeration. Be this as it may, he was a very amusing fellow, and if his face did not shine with oil, it beamed with good-nature. He was the only man on board who, during the awful pitching and tossing which disturbed the card-party in the deck-house, did not yield to stress of weather. Probably a man who takes cod-liver oil in (say) pints daily, could not be made sick by any sea.

When all is said, though we landed looking very grim and sad, and so destitute as to be obliged to borrow money to pay for our railway tickets from those of our companions who lived somewhere near the north, I verily believe, looking back on those times, none of the party would now regret our Spitzbergen swindle; and I am convinced that, properly managed, a well-assorted party of sportsmen and their wives might spend a glorious autumn holiday where we spent a few days of the year 1881.

Should anyone feel inclined to organize such a party, let him go to Tromsö or Hammerfest, and secure his vessel himself, and (if he can) get Kjeldsen or Johannessen to go with him. Let him also remember that he must take all he wants with him to Spitzbergen, as there is no means of obtaining anything there. This I mention, as some gentleman writing to the *Field*, a week or two after a short account of this expedition appeared in that excellent journal, asked me, as far as I remember, what kind of hotel accommodation existed there!

To those who are interested in the ornithology of Spitzbergen, I may add that two of my friends, Mr. A. H. Cox and Mr. Abel Chapman, have published excellent notes on all such matters observed on our voyage, and I am considerably indebted to them for refreshing my memory of what they helped to make a most enjoyable cruise.

THE END.

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